

Agnes Bell.

IN TWO PARTS.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

PART II.

Mr. Bell, the father of Agnes, had always been a warm advocate of Buchanan's policy. He approved of peace in church, and of letting all agitating topics alone. But, after the attack on Fort Sumter the old gentleman's tone underwent a marked change. His latent patriotism was aroused, and he advocated warmly the defence of his country, her flag, her institutions, her honor—all that made her name a praise and a glory in the earth—at all costs, and all sacrifice.

Agnes used to look up in amazement at her father when she heard him avow, with so much enthusiasm, the very sentiments he had so absolutely condemned only a few weeks before, and wonder if it could be the same man who talked then and now. But Agnes's father was not the only man in the country whose sentiments underwent a change after the first of April, eighteen hundred and sixty-one. Mr. Bell's house did a large wholesale business with the South. Before the spring was over Agnes observed that her father looked haggard and anxious, and she began to surmise that the war did not account for his constant abstraction, out of which she could scarcely draw him.

He talked, too, about the ruin this war would bring on everybody, and that we should all become bankrupts; and then he would add,

in a hurried way, "But, better all that than to have no government. Better all perish than that."

One day—it was like a great goblet of pearl, brimming over with the golden wine of the year—Agnes sat at her piano, her fingers flashing across the ivory keys, and martial airs breaking out and thrilling the silent air with their sweet, stirring sounds; and then a deep silence would fall between; and the young, sweet face above the piano would wear that new look of tender sadness which only those who love suffer.

Suddenly the door opened, and looking up, Agnes saw her father. It was very unusual for him to return at that hour of the day; but Agnes's first feeling of surprise was supplanted by one of vague terror. Her father moved feebly across the room and sat down in a chair; his face was very white, and it had the look of a man over whom some sudden and fearful surprise and anguish had passed.

"Oh, father," and she leaped from the piano to his side, "what is the matter—what has happened to you?"

"Get me a glass of water—don't be frightened, daughter. It'll pass off in a minute."

The faint, tremulous tones were in strange contrast with the strong, decided voice of her father. The girl hurried off briskly, although a tremor of fear shook her limbs, and returned in a moment with a waiter, on which was a flask of wine and a pitcher of water. The old man drank a little of both, and then he looked up in his daughter's face with something of anguish, and pity, and loss, that she could not bear, and she cried out sharply—

"Oh, father, is it Edward—has anything happened to him?"

"No, Agnes, it isn't that."

"Tell me, father. I can bear anything better than this suspense."

"Agnes, my poor child, your father is a ruined man! Our house has gone under this morning!"

"O—h, father!" she sat down there; the blow came sudden, and struck hard.

They looked at each other a moment in silence—father and daughter—it was piteous to see them.

"Is everything gone?" whispered the girl at last.

"Everything, my child. It's a bad, bad failure. This war's done it all, and left your father, an old man, without a dollar in the world."

She put her hands over her face. The slow

tears trickled through her fingers. It was better that the shock and the grief should have its way so for a time. There was better stuff in the nature of Agnes Bell. There was material in her that would not be crushed by the loss of money, or anything which did not touch her vitally. So, she sat still awhile weeping her tears. It was natural, nay it was more than this, it was womanly. At last she looked up. Her father still sat gazing on her—pity, anxiety, helplessness, all in his face. It seemed as if this sudden shock had bowed the strong man like reeds shaken in the mighty wind. He looked as though twenty years had gone over him in a day.

"What is to be done, father?" asked Agnes Bell.

"I don't know, my daughter." He put his hand to his forehead. "This blow seems to have stunned me; and I don't know where to go for advice or help."

The sight of her father, so utterly broken down in a single day, smote the girl's heart. The tears stood still in her eyes. She forgot herself, and the innate courage and strength in the heart of Agnes Bell roused itself to do battle with this emergency. She remembered that Edward was away, and that she was all her father had to console or strengthen him in this time of exceeding trial. She would not fail him—weak and tender woman though she was, he should find she could stand up and meet the storm with her steadfast face.

"Must we give up this house, father?" her first thought of the future taking hold on her home.

"Yes, my child. The house will have to go!"

"We can keep some of the furniture," and her gaze wandered tenderly about the spacious sitting-room, with its rich and tasteful appointments.

"I suppose that there will be no difficulty in retaining enough for a small house," answered Mr. Bell, with that dejected, broken-down air which at once showed that despair had taken hold on the man. The sight was another blow on Agnes, but it stirred her to more earnest purpose.

She drew up to the old man; she put her white arms about his neck—

"Papa, don't take it so hard; it might have been a great deal worse."

The old merchant stared at his daughter as though he feared she had gone distraught; he shook his head.

"Poor child, she don't understand anything about misfortune," he said.

"Yes, I do, papa. I understand all about this. And yet, as I said, it might have been worse. If you or Edward had been taken away from me—oh, father, what is the money compared with that!"

Mr. Bell looked at his child with a tenderness that struggled with tears in his gray eyes.

"She is a comfort to me," he said, "my little daughter is a great comfort to her father in this trouble!"

How the words touched the girl, and stirred the springs of heroism and self-sacrifice in her.

"But not half so much of a comfort as I mean to be, papa. You don't dream of the courage and strength down in the heart of the little girl you have petted and spoiled all your life. And the first thing is to look this matter in the face—steadfastly, unflinchingly, and then knowing just how we stand, decide what is best to do!"

"Why, Agnes, what has come over you?" asked her father, amazed at the spirit which she displayed.

"Nothing, father, only the time and circumstances that are to try me. Now I am going to be very practical. In the first place, we must give up this house and take a small one—and, let me see—it must be some little cottage in the country. Aunt Ellen would find one for us near her home; and we could get along with a single servant; and I shall be mistress there, and learn from Aunt Ellen to become a model housekeeper. Just fancy me, papa, moulding biscuit and churning butter, in a gingham apron, with my sleeves rolled up to the elbow!"

Spite of himself the broken merchant smiled faintly at this picture.

"Well, daughter, what next?"

"I shall write to aunt of all that has transpired, and entreat her to seek out a cottage for us at once. You know there is the money that Uncle Nathan left me so many years ago. It was five thousand dollars, and the interest must nearly have doubled it by this time. It's cheap, living at Stoneham, papa, and we can be just as happy as ever, in some dear little cottage among the hills!"

Oh, Agnes Bell, no need to sigh now for the old days of chivalry, for want of high aim and ennobling purpose in life! Your lover and your brother on the distant battle field, your life wearing away in fear and anxiety for their sakes, your father broken in fortune and spirits, and burdened with years—surely your life has its awful tragedy now; the pains, and

the aching, and the sacrifice of womanhood, are fallen unto it!

Agnes's father went out from the presence of his child comforted and strengthened. But the shock had fallen very heavy upon him, and the broken merchant with more than three-score years in his gray hairs, had not the power of moral recuperation that a younger man would have had. He did what he could; but there was no hope that his house could recover itself. The old man did not save five thousand dollars from his large fortune. But the heart of Agnes did not fail her, though very heavy burdens devolved on her. She had been a few months before a thoughtless, exacting, unconsciously selfish girl. She was now an earnest, practical, self-ignoring woman.

Mrs. Lynn would have hastened to the assistance of her niece, but she was ill at this time, and was only able to rent a small but convenient and pleasant cottage for her brother, less than a mile from her own house.

And Agnes was fully absorbed in all the preparations necessary to this entire change in her life, for her father was occupied in settling up his business, and could afford her little assistance. Agnes carried a cheerful face and voice into all this new, trying work; her tears and her struggles she kept for the silence of her own room. It was very hard for the girl to part with many of the luxurious appointments of her home, and some were endeared to her by all tender and pleasant associations; but the small cottage roof which was henceforth to shelter her and her father, could enclose very little of all it cost her so many pangs to leave.

But the matter had to be settled quickly, and Agnes was glad that there was so little time left her for memories and regrets. In less than a month the stately house was given up. Enough of the furniture was reserved to give "the cottage among the hills" an air of taste and refinement; and best of all, Agnes saved her piano and her library.

And one afternoon in the late July, a carriage turned suddenly from the main road, which made a long yellow seam through the heart of the small quiet village of Stoneham, and entered a green lane on the right, thickly flanked with maple trees, amid whose green rafters were many nests of robins and swallows. The small, graceful cottage rose among its vines and cedars like a white flower from a green calyx. The sweet smell of sassafras

was in the air, mingling with the balsam of the pines.

"This is the house, sir," said the loud tones of the driver, as he drew up before the front gate. "It's just two miles and a half from the depot, by the old turnpike."

Mr. Bell alighted first, with the slow steps which suited his gray hairs, and after him came an eager face, a swift, graceful figure, and Agnes Bell searched with her brown, greedy eyes the house which was henceforth to be her home.

"It doesn't look much like the one we left in New York, daughter," said her father, as the two faces sought each other after a thorough scrutiny of the external physiognomy of the cottage.

The girl's face did not lose its eager brightness.

"It's a great deal prettier, papa, and to think I am its mistress!"

She bounded eagerly along the walk, and her father followed, with a faint reflection in his smile of the light in his daughter's face. The furniture had been forwarded from New York two weeks before, and the house had been set in order by Mrs. Lynn and a trusty domestic.

And so Agnes Bell went from a palace to a cottage!

It was a beautiful morning in the late October. Agnes Bell had been out among the woody hills half a mile from her home; and now she entered the sitting-room with a small basket of the treasures she had found there. There were vines of partridge berries, with their red bells like tiny coils of fire among the leaves—there were sprays of prince's feather, the dead green making a deeper contrast with the pale lichens and light ferns. There were cushions of coral moss, with their faint scarlet embroidery, and blue clusters of gentians like smiles lost out of some May sky.

Agnes Bell came into the sitting-room with wild roses wide open in her cheeks, and her eyes full of the joy and peace of the woods. Mr. Bell was reading, sitting near the window where the October sunshine fell warmest; he looked worn and thin. He had had a slight stroke of paralysis late in the summer, and had not yet entirely recovered the use of his limbs.

"See, papa," exclaimed Agnes, "what I have found!" and she held up the small wicker basket with more real pleasure than she had often done her jewels. "The morning was so

beautiful, it enticed me off into the woods, and I stayed longer than I meant to; but I shall find time to make you a custard pudding for dinner," and she glanced at the handsome bronze clock on the mantel—the clock they had brought from the city.

"Yes, yes, daughter, they are very pretty," said the old man, in an absent way, glancing not at the flowers, but up from the paper to the bright face of his child.

Agnes saw at once that some evil had happened. The wild roses fell from her cheeks, as the basket did from her hands.

"Papa," she gasped, "has there been a battle?"

"Yes, daughter, a terrible battle, at Ball's Bluff; and—and—"

He looked at her, and his look said that he could not finish the tidings. She sank down on the floor, and writhed herself up to her father, and put her white face over his shoulder, and her greedy eyes sought the paper in his hands. The old man divined her purpose. He placed his hand on one of the columns, but her eyes had grazed it, and she knew that her father's hand covered the "*list of killed and wounded.*"

"Let me see, father." The whisper from the white lips was hoarse, but it was imperative.

"I'm afraid you can't bear it daughter," said the old man, and it was difficult to tell which was fullest of pity, his face or his voice.

"Let me see it, father." This time there was no denying. Mr. Bell removed his hand; and in the next half minute Agnes had seized the words. Captain Guy Wooster had been severely wounded by a musket in the leg, at the battle of Ball's Bluff.

"Oh God in heaven, my troubles are greater than I can bear!" moaned the poor girl, and she sank down at her father's feet, and buried her white face in her hands.

This was the first time that her heart had failed her. She had borne all the change and loss which had fallen to her lot, brave and cheerful—her father's illness, the absence of her brother and lover, and the wearing anxiety for their welfare—the care of a household which had but one domestic, and whose master was too feeble to have even the supervision of its expenses—all these things, to her honor be it told, had Agnes Bell borne, and carried her sweet, brave smile, her strong, hopeful tones through them all; but now she broke down—hope and faith went out for awhile, and the storm thundered wild and fierce over her soul.

"Don't, my child, don't," said the broken merchant, seeking with vain words to comfort his child. "It may not be so bad as the paper states."

"And it *may* be worse, papa. Oh, if he should have his limb amputated, or if he should die there alone in the hospital!"

For a half hour after these words Agnes Bell said no more. She sat on the floor rocking to and fro, her face frozen into a great horror of anguish. Then there came a light knock at the door, and Mrs. Lynn entered. She had just read the tidings of the battle, and her face was full of sorrow and sympathy. She went up to her niece and put her arms about her, and Agnes leaned her head down on her aunt's shoulder, in a helpless, forsaken way, and for awhile there were no words spoken betwixt the two.

And when Mrs. Lynn did speak, the words were not her own—

"Agnes, 'What time, I am afraid; I will trust in Thee.'"

The sweet voice sounded like a silver clarion in the dead silence. The blessed words fell into the heart of Agnes Bell like precious balm, and God comforted her. At last, life came back into the frozen face, her tears fell fast and warm, and her aunt prevailed on her to go up stairs and lie down, and she did not leave her niece until she was sleeping the sweet sleep of a little child.

Mrs. Lynn remained with her brother's family for the next four days. Agnes was not well, and slept most of this time, and her aunt would steal softly up the stairs, and watch the sweet, pale face as it lay on the pillow, with the look which told in slumber, even, its story of patient suffering, and the tears would brim Mrs. Lynn's soft eyes, and she turn away with no help but the prayer in her heart.

At the end of those long four days there came a letter from Guy Wooster. He was at the hospital. The physicians had decided that his limb need not be amputated, but it would probably take months to heal it. He was out of danger, though, and strong and of good courage still.

And Agnes thanked God, and took heart again.

A month had passed. It was at the tender closing of a day in the Indian summer, those holiest days of the year. Agnes Bell had been reading to her father, in the sitting-room, and she closed the book at last, saying—

"I must go out and hunt you some fresh eggs for tea, papa, before it grows dark."

Just at that moment, a carriage drove slowly up to the front gate, and when Agnes looked, she saw the driver carefully assisting somebody to alight.

The second glance drove the blood from her heart, and made her stagger for a moment, and then she bounded out of the front door, and—they met at the gate—Guy Wooster and Agnes Bell!

Dear reader, have there not been, all over the land, during the year that has gone, just such meetings?

At last they were in the little parlor together—alone! Guy Wooster was worn with much suffering; Agnes searched his face, and her eyes were damp with tears.

"Oh, Guy! God only knows how glad I am to see you!"

"The doctors said I needed rest and entire quiet. I shall be good for nothing in the service for a long time, so I came to *you*, darling."

"Thank God!—oh, Guy, thank God!"

"But, Agnes," and a pang went over the pale face—"do you know—I shall be a *lame man* for

Whatever was in her face then was for him, not herself. He watched her with eyes full of greedy anxiety, until he knew the truth; then he drew her to his heart, and they wept together, and their tears were not all tears of sorrow.

I have told my story—how out of an exacting, dissatisfied and indolent life, Agnes Bell suddenly woke up, as many of our countrywomen have done, into courage and self-sacrifice—into endurance and endeavor, and all that ennobles and glorifies womanhood.

For the rest, Guy Wooster had an indulgent and wealthy father, and the young officer wished to take his bride back to the city, and reinstate her in her former life; but she said—"I have been happiest in the little cottage; let me stay here, Guy—at least, until the war is over."

And he assented; and there, a month later, were wedded Guy Wooster and Agnes Bell, better man and woman for the discipline this war had wrought out for them.

Edward Bell is at his post in the army, doing his work, a brave soldier and a true patriot, and reading with watchful, patient eyes, the signs of the times, and looking off to the hills for the dawn of that new peace which shall be better than the old.

Beside the Waters.

BY MINNIE W. MAY.

CHAPTER I.

"But Ellen—"

"No, Willard, I will not hear you. Only think now, if it was me."

The young wife placed one white hand playfully over her husband's mouth, but though her manner was sportive, there were tears in the deep, dark eyes, and her face looked sad and thoughtful.

"Here is our dear home, all our own; your practice is daily increasing; surely we do not need Rock Cottage, and did we need it, would it not be worth while to sacrifice a little for the comfort of Mrs. James and her fatherless children? It cost us nothing, you know, thanks to your kind old uncle; and now, Willard, will you not make out the deed at once, and so remove the great burden from Mrs. James's mind? I will work, oh, so hard to help you, if you only will."

"I know, darling, you will do all you can, and I love you all the more for this kindness of heart, but we are not really able to give so much. I am ready at any moment to pay back the five hundred dollars Mr. James had paid towards the cottage, and she shall remain there, till some way opens to provide for herself and children. It is hard, Ellen, I know, but we have only our hands, and if anything should happen this house will not support us."

"You talk, Willie, as if it was just the easiest thing in the world for Mrs. James to find employment in which she could earn a

livelihood, but she is very frail, and those three poor little children, the eldest hardly seven. Ah, Willard, five hundred dollars will go but a little ways. But, with the house and garden secure, I dare say she will be able to support herself very comfortably. At what do you value the cottage?"

"Fifteen hundred, James was to pay. One thousand dollars is a great deal to give away, outright."

"But is it not a great deal more for a poor widow to leave the home where so many years of her happy married life have been spent, and go out into the world alone? Now you are going to consent, I see it in your eyes. That is a dear, good husband. I shall love you all the better, and surely God will not forget your work and labor of love."

Looking into Mrs. Haven's face at that moment, you would have forgotten the irregular features, the pale, thin cheeks, that had neither bloom nor fairness in them, for her heart, always gushing out in kind words and deeds, left its impress upon her face, and it was sweet and pure, notwithstanding its plainness. It was hard for the husband to refuse her any request, much less when his own conscience was strongly urging the act, and as he kissed the uplifted face, and smiled fondly back into the loving eyes, he answered—

"Well, Ellen, I will make out the deed at once, and you shall ride over to the cottage with me, this evening, and I will tell Mrs. James it is you who must receive all the thanks, for it is your gentle pleading that has won me."

There was no lack of firmness, however, in

the physiognomy of the young lawyer. He was a noble, true man, one always determined in the cause of right, and as equally determined against injustice in every form. Strong, self-reliant, he was eminently calculated to take a high place in his chosen profession.

He was just such a man as Ellen Haven, with her gentle, vine-like nature, needed for a support and shelter, and for nearly two years he had been the pillar upon which she had leaned; two years, with scarce a frown upon the face of their wedded life. The home in which they had commenced their lives together, had been the first fruits of the young man's industry and economy; Rock Cottage having fallen to his portion in the will of a relative, before he had fairly attained his majority. It was a humble spot, but two fond hearts had commenced life together there, with just such bright hopes and joyful anticipations, as now hovered about the beautiful home of the young lawyer. The young mechanic had laid by enough to pay one-third the cost of the cottage, and furnish it neatly, and with health and strength to labor, he hoped at the end of five years to meet all the payments, take up the mortgage, and call it proudly his own. And with their young, strong hearts, life presented as many charms, and upon the hill-top of their aspirations the sun shone as brightly, and the air was as sweet and balmy, as upon those far-off mountains, upon whose summits men of greater wealth and influence raise their standard.

At the end of the first year everything seemed prosperous, but hardly a week before the first payment became due, his small shop, containing the implements of his trade, was burned to ashes. It was a heavy blow to the hopeful young spirits, but Mr. Haven kindly released him from the first payment till the ensuing year, and with a little less ambition than at first, he set about repairing his loss. But misfortune seemed to lie directly across his path. Before the close of the second year he had been crippled by a severe accident, and confined to his bed for many weeks. This had made such fearful inroads upon his health, that much of his time he was unable to labor, and with crushed hopes and spirits he had lingered on for the next five years, earning barely enough to support his little family; and then he had dropped down the burden of toil, care, and anxiety, and gone to rest. It had been four weeks, and Mrs. James had sent word that she was ready to vacate the cottage, and asked in such a sorrowful, pleading way,

that Mr. Haven would, in kindness to her desolate condition, consider the sum already paid equivalent to the rent; and begged, if any way in which she could provide for herself and little ones, so that they might not be separated, should come to his knowledge, he would not forget her. Ellen wept bitterly over the heart-broken note, that was already blistered with tears, and then, out of the kindness of her nature, sprang up the pure and holy impulse, which, with unwavering firmness, she urged upon her husband's consideration.

He had promised, and now there were smiles instead of tears, and merry bursts of laughter broke over her sweet lips as she leaned over her husband's shoulder, and watched his swift pen filling out the long blank that was to carry such relief and joy to deserving hearts.

"And will you sign away all claim to Rock Cottage, my little Ellie. Think well before you answer. The money would buy you a great many delightful things, for which I hear you wish occasionally."

Mr. Haven placed the deed before his wife, and the pen in her slender fingers.

"It will purchase something for poor Mrs. James, that I am overflowing with, Willard, and that is, happiness. But where shall I write it. I never got on farther in a deed than 'know all men by these presents,' for all my husband is a lawyer."

"Right beneath my name, Ellen. There are Rogers and Weston coming up the street, just in the right time. I will ask them in to witness the instrument."

Ellen traced her name, daintily, beneath the bold characters of her husband, and as she laid down the pen, she brought her hands together, exclaiming gleefully—

"There! I never did so much good with my name before, in all my life. I am so glad Willard has done this."

"Then you acknowledge this to be your signature, Mrs. Haven?" asked the young man, who had entered the room at the call of his friend. "You have done what few persons would have done Willard, my friend, but I honor you for it; you will not lose your reward."

Rock Cottage looked very desolate to the little group who occupied the humble sitting-room that summer evening, with only the stars of heaven lighting up the dreary room. It was a neat, cheerful little spot outwardly, for all it was so small; just at the foot of the high

bluff, that kept off the chill north winds, with its nicely kept garden running around it, the front filled with trees and shrubs, and a few choice flowers, that the hand of Mrs. James had stolen time to cultivate; the kitchen garden at the back, where was growing sufficient to support the little family through many months of the year, could they only call it their own. The piazza was latticed, and vines crept over it, making a cool, refreshing shade from the summer sun; and in the evening, the moonlight twinkled in among the leaves, and lay in broken shadows along the narrow floor. Mrs. James sat in a low chair by the window, with one little one in her lap and another nestled down by her side, while with her foot she touched the wicker cradle, to hush the youngest, the little Alice, over whose sunny head but two brief summers had come and gone, into slumber.

To a casual observer it might have been a sweet home-picture, but there was another wanting to complete the charm, and Mrs. James felt this keenly, bitterly. But there was another thought lying with leaden weight upon her heart that evening, as she held her treasures close to her, and listened to their soft, healthful breathing, that in the silence fell upon her ear. They must go out from the home that had sheltered their innocent heads. But whither? How many times had she asked herself the bitter question, and shuddered as the painful answer presented itself to her mind. How could she bear separation from those little buds of promise that were unfolding new beauties day by day, and gaining deeper hold upon her affections, as they came to her with childish words of comfort. She had received offers from people with kind hearts to receive them into their families, one here and another there, but they did not know with what a pang she listened to their kind words, and yet she felt it must be so. There was nothing but the small stock of furniture left, and much of that had been sold to procure necessities for her sick husband; and with her feeble hands it would be impossible to keep them together, and gradually she was trying to bring herself to realize the agonizing truth. Homeless. Alas! that all over this bright, beautiful earth, dotted with its palaces and costly mansions, of so many aching hearts this painful truth should be written.

We look wonderingly upon this mystery in God's Providence; we see the most deserving, in our narrow vision, the humble, devoted followers of His Son left to perish in the dark

corners of His earth, while the wicked, the vile, and the ungodly stand in high places, and a little feeling of unequity would sometimes creep stealthily into Mrs. James's heart at this thought; but she tried to keep her faith bright and unwavering, relying upon those precious promises of that glorious hereafter, where everything would be made plain. How she longed to take the little flock in her arms and carry them safely to the bosom of the good shepherd, and know that they were forever safe.

"Are you crying, mother?" One little hand ran itself over Mrs. James's cheek, brushing away the tears that were falling silently over it. "Don't mamma. You see that pretty bright star, looking right in upon us? Well, papa's beyond that ever so far, and he don't have to cough and shiver, and be tired and sick any more. He told me, one night when you was in the garden, that he wouldn't when he got up there. And I am your little man, ain't I, mother? You know I shall soon be big enough to take care of you—me and Fred. Now won't you light the lamp just a few minutes, so I can see your face. It is so dark here."

"Well, you rock little sister." Mrs. James patted the curly head of her childish comforter, as she arose to light the lamp in which the oil was burned low. Its rays reached every corner of the room, and the poor woman glanced about the familiar apartment with a sigh of anguish. At that moment a carriage paused before the gate, and a gentleman and lady came slowly up the walk.

"It is Mr. Haven, isn't it, mother, and we will have to go?" Mrs. James's heart sunk lower than ever, and it was with difficulty she could command her voice sufficiently to receive her guests. But Mrs. Haven chatted on in her pleasant, soothing way, and Mr. Haven's voice and manner were so full of kindness, a half hour passed before she could bring herself back to the cold, stern reality. At length the gentleman rose to depart, without a word relating to the cottage having passed between them. Mrs. James moved quickly to his side, and laying her hand upon his arm, said, in a broken voice—

"Mr. Haven, I am ready to go."

"Mrs. James, Rock Cottage is yours, your heirs and assigns forever, and here is the deed signed, sealed and delivered," placing the document in her hand, "and if you stand in need of friends, be assured you will ever find them in Mrs. Haven and myself." The young

widow raised her pale face to his with a look of blank amazement.

"No, no, Mr. Haven, you have not done this. Indeed I cannot take it. I can never hope to pay you."

"Nor do I expect or wish you to do so; but you must accept it, and believe me when I tell you I was never so well satisfied with an evening's work in my life. But do not thank me, it is all owing to my dear little mentor here," looking tenderly upon his companion, who stood with tears dimming her dark eyes, and upon her heart the low words of Mrs. James fell like a solemn benediction, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

Mrs. James went back to the sitting-room, and opening the deed ran her eyes over its contents, and falling upon her knees, she buried her face in her hands. Not a word escaped her lips, but that silent prayer of thanksgiving just as surely reached the throne of the Most High.

"Mamma, mamma, what is it?" pleaded the eldest boy, lifting the bowed head in his hands, and gazing into her flushed face with an eager, frightened look. She caught him in her arms, and kissed him almost wildly. She lifted the sleeping child from its cradle, and strained it closely to her breast.

"Oh, it is life, and joy, and peace, my sweet children—you are mine yet, and now we shall never be separated."

CHAPTER II.

"I do not see any way—indeed I do not."

"Well, mother, if you tell me so, I must try, and give it up, that is all."

The sorry tones of the speaker would have told you at once he was disappointed in the cherished hope of his heart, his words were so full of half-concealed regret. His was a young, hopeful face, upon which not more than nineteen years had written their impress—a little pale and delicate, as if its owner was hardly strong enough to cope with the storms and trials of a troublous world. It bore a striking resemblance to the thoughtful face at his side, and the sorrowful look that lay upon the one was reflected by the other, for the mother love was strong in the lady's heart, and it had caused her a severe mental struggle to give the discouraging answer to her son's eager, hopeful question. It was a cheerful room in which the two were conversing in a subdued whisper, and everything about the neat house and grounds bespoke the taste and refinement

of its owner. The sunshine stretched itself out upon the carpet, and lighted up the walls and the plain, substantial furniture, and at length crept around to the white draped bed, upon which reclined a man still in the prime of life. His eyes were closed, but the varying expression upon his face told that he was not sleeping. He was a noble-looking man, though sickness had paled his cheek, and mingled silver threads with the dark brown hair that lay upon the pillow. For all the years had dealt hardly with him, they had not stolen the kind, generous expression which had once characterized the face of the young lawyer, Willard Haven. It had been five years since the fatal stroke had fallen upon him, rendering him nearly helpless, and, though he had been ambitious almost to a fault, and his course thus far had been a continued season of success, he bore his reverses with a degree of fortitude that was sometimes surprising, even to himself. While he had been thus prosperous, he had not given a thought to dark hours that might open in his future, but moved on in a sense of security, living just within his income, as is too frequently the case, and so when sickness or death smites down the head, the family are left destitute, when a little provident forethought would have enabled them to continue on in ease and comfort. The blow had fallen suddenly. Mr. Haven had been employed upon a case requiring all his energies, and he had toiled early and late, giving the subject his undivided attention, till brain and nerve were stretched to their utmost tension. But the evidence was so strongly against his client, all his efforts to bring the aggressor to justice, proved unavailing, and when the trial was over, his overtaxed frame gave way, and during the severe sickness that followed, his limbs became paralyzed. But though his bright career was thus early brought to a close and years of helplessness might be appointed him, his life was spared, and with hearts full of thankfulness the little family remembered this, and no murmuring word ever passed their lips.

Mrs. Haven was illy fitted for this trial. It was hard to rouse her timid, dependent nature into the active exertion that became necessary, and it was not till the way before her began to look dark, that she brought herself to realize that upon her energy and strength now depended the support of the family. She had several years before removed from the pleasant spot where their early married life had been spent, and purchased a home ne-

the thriving metropolis, where Mr. Haven's success seemed so secure. This remained to them, with its neat, tasteful furniture, and that was all. The long illness had taken everything else, and Mrs. Haven often glanced a little fearfully into the future. The eldest son at once sought a clerkship in the adjoining city, and his small salary, joined with what Mrs. Haven received from a small class of pupils in music and drawing, enabled them, with the use of the most rigid economy, to live quite comfortably.

But the heart of Charles Haven was not in his work. It was mere drudgery to him, and as the years passed it grew more and more distasteful. He had been nearly fitted for college when the sad stroke had fallen upon his father, and it cost him many struggles to give up his cherished plan; but now that his brother and sister were growing older, his sister already taking his mother's place, a little hope sprang up in his heart, secretly cherished at first, but on this afternoon he had made it known to his mother, and the pale, sad little woman's heart ached to give the answer that was next to crushing out life itself from her dutiful, loving son. She could not sit and watch the disappointment that had gathered over the young face, without the tears coming in between it, and so she arose softly and went up to her son's chamber, and kneeling down by his bed she poured out her full soul in prayer to God for help in this dark hour of trial.

"Charles, dear boy, come here." Mr. Haven's voice had lost its deep, full tones, and there was a perceptible quiver in it as he addressed the young man, who sat with his head leaning upon his hand, and his eyes fixed vacantly upon something outside the window, which it was quite evident he did not see. His father had been watching him intently for some minutes, and he knew it was no ordinary sorrow that had clouded the youthful brow.

Charles drew a seat to the bedside, and clasped the thin hand that was outstretched to him, closely in his own.

"My son, something is troubling you—will you not tell your father? I cannot bear that you should keep all the trials and perplexities that come upon you from me. It is through kindness to my helpless condition, I know; but perhaps I could sometimes help you."

"It is nothing, father, believe me, but just a little waywardness of mine that has caused me momentary pain."

The searching eyes looked beyond the quiet

exterior which Charles assumed to hide the deep feeling, and he said, as he turned his head upon the pillow—

"Then you will not confide in your father?"

"Why yes, father, I tell you everything that is worth hearing; but this—it will hardly be right—I wish I had not said anything to mother. I only got a little dissatisfied with my present life, and longed to go back to my books. I may as well tell you how it happened, but do not let it trouble you in the least, for I shall soon get over it. You see Mr. Farrar has taken quite a fancy to your boy, thinks he is a genius most decidedly, calculated to take a high place in the professional world, like his father before him. I have conversed with him occasionally, and he knows my present occupation is not wholly congenial, how much I love study, and what your early plans were in regard to my education. He has kindly offered me a situation where I could nearly pay my expenses in college for the first and second years, and he is confident with a few weeks' study I could be ready for examination, and then he is pleased to picture a brilliant future for me. I must own to feeling a little elated with the prospect at first, but now I think it all over I see it is quite impossible. Mother is too slender to take upon her so much care, and Fanny is already doing all her strength will allow. Upon Carroll will depend the real work; he is just as you were, I know, strong and wide awake, while Fanny and I are more like our mother. But it will not do to take him out of school yet. I am sure we have everything, father; I do not complain."

"No, my son, you have been a faithful child, and I pray God that some way may open to you, though I cannot now give you any real hope. Oh, this poor, helpless arm—it is hard, hard!"

"Now, father, if you go to talking in that discouraged way, I will never tell you my secrets again. We have you still with us to counsel and comfort us, and the way is opening brighter, now that we are all getting old enough to help."

"Help, brother Charlie? What was that you were saying? I just caught your last word, but I am quite sure it is me that is the help!" and the young girl commenced smoothing out the bank bills she had crushed up in her hand, and strewing them down one by one upon the bed.

"There, father," she said, delightedly, as the last note fluttered down, and she stooped to kiss the white cheek, "I earned every cent of

that myself—thirty-five dollars. It cost me some trial of temper and patience, but now that I am getting accustomed to dealing with so many different dispositions it will be very easy."

"*Help?*" echoed Carroll, who had bounded into the room at the moment his sister began to count her treasures—"you talk about helping—that is nothing to what I have done, for all I am such a little fellow."

He approached the bedside, carefully untying the corner of his pocket handkerchief, and the small silver coins that glistened in the little fat palm looked very large to his childish eyes.

"Stole it, did you, little boy?" asked his brother, mischievously, turning around and gazing full into the bright face.

"No, sir, earned it every cent this afternoon, doing errands. I am going every Wednesday and Saturday. You may have it, father. He took up his father's hand, and carefully depositing the money therein, closed the fingers over it.

"You are all *helps*, my dear children—one ought never to murmur with such blessings about him.

Charles went out of the room and out into the garden. He was not quite happy. There was a feeling of unrest in his heart that he would gladly have torn out, and as he walked up and down in the cool shadows of the trees, his disappointment swept over him again with cruel power.

"The dream is over," he said, half aloud—"I should have known better than to have indulged it for a moment; and so I must go back to my old place, and toil on, week after week, lifting and tugging, and weighing and measuring, that the veriest fool in christendom might do. It was the first thing that presented itself, and I was thankful enough for it then, but now the years stretch on in such unvarying monotony. I have not enough ambition in my employment to rise above a mere grocer's clerk. I believe I might make something if I could only have a chance, but as it is I shall sink into a mere cipher, and no one in the world be the better for my having been in it." The bitter waves rose higher and higher over the young man's soul, as he allowed his thoughts to sweep over the whole of his life experience.

And while he paced up and down the garden, two ladies passed up the walk. He saw that his sister opened the door to admit them, and that was all; his mind was too much pre-occupied to give them a passing thought.

Mrs. Haven came down from her son's chamber with a feeling of calm and holy peace. There was a striking resemblance in the two, into whose faces she gave an eager look as she entered the parlor. The one was just past the prime of life, and the other just entering the threshold of womanhood, with a face pure and fresh in its youthful beauty. The elder lady arose as Mrs. Haven entered, and held out her hand in a cordial way.

"Mrs. James," was all she said, but in a moment Mrs. Haven was back in Rock Cottage, and the pale, sad widow stood before, while the years that had passed by lay like a dream upon her.

"Is it possible?" burst involuntarily from her lips. "I am glad to look into your face once more, and see that the years have dealt kindly with you since last we met."

"Very kindly, Mrs. Haven, and it is all through your blessed instrumentality. My daughter, this is our sweet benefactress, whose name was almost the first you were taught to lip."

"Is this the little Alice who lay sleeping in the cradle on an evening we both remember, so many long years ago? Such remembrances make me feel very old."

Then a pleasant conversation sprang up between the ladies, and each told the other of the joys and sorrows that had fallen to their lot in the years that had come and gone. Mrs. James had been truly prospered. Her only brother had returned from an eastern voyage a wealthy man, and he had supplied her bountifully, while she could now look upon her sons, noble and enterprising in their early manhood, with a degree of pride that was not unfounded. They had both taken the right start in life, and were now doing a flourishing business in the city, near which Mr. Haven was residing; and it was by accident Mrs. James, while on a visit to them, learned the residence of her benefactor, for whom she had been upon the search for several years.

"My dear Mrs. Haven," she said, as she clasped her hand at parting, "the blessings that have resulted from your generous act you can never know here, but they are written beneath your name in the kingdom of Heaven. We have never ceased to pray for you, night and morning. Tell your good husband this, and how sorry I am for his affliction, and give him this token of my remembrance," and she placed a small sealed package in Mrs. Haven's hand. There were tears in the lady's eyes, but her countenance was radiant with joy, and as

Mrs. Haven closed the door upon her retreating form, she felt that she had not lived quite in vain.

She went quickly to her husband's apartment, and hastily breaking the seal, placed the contents before him. Mr. Haven glanced his eyes over it casually; then a cry of amazement broke from his lips. He looked it over again and again.

"Ellen, do you know what this means? It is an order on Blackstone Bank for nearly four thousand dollars. It must be a mistake some way."

"You remember Rock Cottage, husband? Truly we have not sown in vain, for even in this life we have received a two-fold reward. Charlie, dear boy—God be thanked that this way has opened so clearly for him. But Willard, I can hardly credit my senses after all—is it a reality?"

"Yes it is, dear wife—bless you for the kind thought that prompted our action. Had we retained Rock Cottage, it would now be worthless, or the money long ago spent; but here it is, principal and interest for the twenty-seven years. It once made Mrs. James comfortable and happy; and now, oh, what will it not be to us and our dear children? Truly, 'blessed are they that sow beside all waters.'"

There was a silent prayer of thanksgiving going up from the hearts of both parents, while Fanny stood holding the slip of paper in her hand, gazing upon it, as if trying to take in the real truth. At length a glad shout broke from her lips, and with a swift bound she was out of the room and down the garden walk, with her arms about her brother's neck.

"Oh, Charlie, my brother, no more days of toil for you, no more weary hours, with silent struggles for something higher, nobler, that will cry out within you—I know, for I have felt it so many times. Only look at this!" and she placed the mysterious order before his eyes.

"Why, it does not mean our father, Fanny?"

"But it does; sit right down here beneath this tree, and I will tell you all about it."

And the wind caught up the soft tones of Fanny's voice, and bore them to the young man's ear, as they sat under the cool shadows of the old maple that summer afternoon; and seldom do words carry with them such peace and joy as now filled the heart of Charles Haven. He could again indulge the old bright dream, and this time it did not fade away.

Sarcasm vs. Heart.

BY F. L. SARMIENTO.

I.

"Some of these days, Fanny, you will offend some one mortally with your reckless witticisms," said an aged lady to a young girl by her side.

"Pshaw, mamma!" was the laughing answer, "I'm not afraid," and with a saucy fling of the head the beautiful girl swept towards the door.

"Yes, but some time or other you will go too far," continued the lady, whom we must now call the mother, "and really I don't believe that Mr. Harland likes it one bit, for even now I fancy that he turns sadly, nay, almost angrily from you, when you have said something particularly cutting—even though he may smile for the moment at the wit of your remark."

Fanny had reached the door, but arrested by these last words she turned back, and reëntered the parlor, with a half angry flush upon her features.

"So Mr. Harland does not like it? Why does he laugh, then, at my sarcasm?"

"Simply because it is one's first impulse to do so, but a repentant shade instantly obliterates his smile, and I can assure you that he feels the cut of your wit fully as much as does your hapless victim."

"Yet I never direct my wit at him."

"Not in his presence, certainly."

"No, nor behind his back."

"Perhaps not, but is he assured of that? Men are always afraid of sarcastic women—especially men of Mr. Harland's peculiar temperament. Open to, and fearful, as he is, of ridicule. You may depend upon it, Fanny, it is not the way to secure either his esteem or affection."

"Pshaw, mamma, men are as fond of dashing, rattling women, as children are of noisy, glittering toys! Besides, who *could* help poking fun at that ridiculous N—— family, with its travelled conceit and eternal talk about Paris—or Par-ic, as they call the French capital?"

"Yes," continued the mother, still doubtfully, and dwelling upon the first part of her daughter's speech alone, "yes, men are fond of toys, but *as* toys. Do they ever do anything but play with them?"

It was spoken musingly, and there was no answer to the question, if question it could be called, for the handsome but pert Fanny had

swept out of the room—along the broad corridor and up the broad stairway, while at the same moment the loud signal went forth proclaiming it time to dress for dinner.

The scene was the parlor of one of our fashionable hotels. Mrs. Benton and her daughter were on a visit to the city to take leave of a near relative, who had lately received an appointment in the navy, and were accompanied by a Mr. Harland, a wealthy bachelor, and who Madam Rumor had already given out, was much attached to our witty but sarcastic friend—Fanny Benton.

Mrs. Benton was a widow. Relations she had none, except her daughter and the young man then about to enter the navy. With failing health, was it any wonder, knowing the unprotected state in which Fanny would be left, on the event of any accident to herself, that she should have a mother's desire to see her settled in life—with a kind husband to take care of her, to protect and guide her? She was therefore particularly anxious that her daughter's reckless sarcasm should not alienate a man like Mr. Harland, who was all her fond mother-heart could have wished for as the guardian of her daughter's happiness.

It was with a solemn shake of the head then that she viewed Fanny's light bound up the stairway, and she stood musingly, until the rattle of silver and the clash of dishes in the adjoining dining-room warned her that the meal would soon be served.

II.

The table of the —— House was crowded as usual, and along each side of the long board were placed richly dressed ladies and gentlemen, as though vis-a-vis for some lively contredance.

Between Fanny and her mother sat Mr. Harland, a fine yet grave looking man of thirty-two or three years of age, while opposite sat the N—— family, of whom Fanny had spoken. This family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. N——, two wealthy but rather ordinary personages; young N——, an unmitigated fop and brainless fellow, and Miss Clara N——, a niece of the old couple—a retiring and sensitive girl.

They had just returned from a Continental tour, having staid but long enough in Paris and other grand European capitals to see all the charms and none of the evils thereof, and become inoculated with that vulgar distaste for one's own country that is sometimes visible in people who have been abroad for a short

period. This was not the case, however, with Clara, who was as true an American as ever, and who, although not a talented girl like Fanny Benton, was nevertheless keenly alive to the ridiculous phase in which her cousin exhibited her as well as himself. On this particular day, Fanny Benton was overflowing with sarcasm, and as her pointed arrows flew from side to side, few there, even while they smiled, but felt their keenness. Frank Heyward, her young relative, was there, in his handsome uniform; and encouraged and drawn out by his approving laughter and evident enjoyment, the clever girl was more dashing than ever in her remarks. Young N——, too, was as foolish as usual, and found nothing at table to suit his taste so well as the dishes to be had at the *Trois Frères*, or “Troy Fray-er,” as he pronounced it. The difference between a Parisian dinner and a Philadelphia one was then loudly discussed, and “Par-ic” repeated at every word. The absurdity had really gone to extremes, when Fanny, turning towards the laughing navy officer, exclaimed aloud—

“Well, Frank, we must acknowledge that the proprietors of this Hotel are very careful to provide us with amusement, for the last time we were here, if you remember, they had some Choctaw Indians, on their way to Washington, and now they have ‘a travelled family!’”

The cutting, sarcastic tones vibrated like a thunder-peal in the hearts of all present, but they failed to provoke a laugh, for all eyes were turned upon the gentle face of Clara N——, which from a deep scarlet had become deathly pale, while a tear, wrung forth by the cruel words, could be seen just glistening upon her cheek.

Fanny, surprised at the sudden stillness, turned towards Mr. Harland, but his eyes too were fixed upon the pale face opposite, and when he did turn his glance towards her it was with a look of pain and indignation.

Several days after this a party of ladies and gentlemen were assembled in the drawing-room of the Hotel, chatting and laughing as people are apt to do after a good dinner. Fanny, as usual, had been relating “something uncommonly good,” tinged and heightened, as usual, with her unfortunate, sarcastic humor. In Mrs. N——, a woman, it must be acknowledged, of limited education, she had discovered with her usual lively fancy the original Mrs. Partington. True, a Mrs. Partington who had travelled, but still the original

of that curious old lady, whose “pizarro” on top of her house and “turpentine” walks in her garden have become famous.

“Did she really say that?” asked one of the assembled company. “Ha! ha! ha! I declare, it’s the joke of the season!”

“What is the joke of the season?” inquired Mr. Harland, who had just joined the party, and heard but the concluding words of the last speaker.

“What is the joke of the season?”

“Why, Miss Benton has detected old Mrs. N—— in another Partingtonism; she says, ‘of all kinds of shell-fish she likes eggs the best!’ Did you ever hear anything better than that?”

“I cannot conceive of Mrs. N—— saying such a thing,” returned Mr. Harland, gravely.

“Nor did she. Don’t you see, it is only some of Miss Fanny’s fun. But it’s a capital joke, isn’t it?”

“Yes, but is it exactly truthful in Miss Fanny, to charge Mrs. N—— with having committed such an absurdity—not to speak of the unkindness of making a ‘butt’ of an old person?” continued Mr. Harland.

“It is only what she would have said, if she had had wit enough to have thought of it,” answered Fanny, quite nettled.

“Miss Benton,” returned Mr. Harland, low but distinctly, “a good heart, such as I trust you possess, should never indulge in such sarcasm. Ignorance, when we meet with it, is to be pitied, not laughed at; and believe me, after all, to my mind, at least, *good-natured stupidity is preferable to ill-natured wit!*”

He had seen what no other there had noticed. It was the light form of Clara N——, who had unwittingly heard the whole conversation. She was staggering rather than walking from the room, her face ablaze with shame and humiliation. As she left the room her handkerchief fell from her nerveless grasp, and as Mr. Harland sprang forward to return it to her, a glance of deepest import was exchanged—a look that beat down the barriers of formality at once, and when their hands touched, though but for an instant, there was a kindly pressure that needed no reproach, still less an explanation. Further I need not go. Fanny Benton was cured of her sarcasm, for she too had seen the look; but it was too late. Mr. Harland, like a true gentleman, took herself and mother to their home, but he returned immediately to Philadelphia, in which city’s newspapers Fanny

soon read, without any attempt at wit or
sarcasm—

“On the 28th inst. by the Rev. Mr. Blank,
Miss Clara N——, to Mr. George Harland,
both of this city.”

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Margaret Day.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

"This is the way : walk ye in it !"

I turned my head, for a voice behind me seemed to have spoken these words,—a voice which carried in itself an authority so absolute, that I did not question its right to command obedience for a moment.

But there was no one in my room. The silence was unbroken save by the splashes of the rain—the great desolate rain outside, which some sudden gust of wind occasionally took hold of, and shook out fiercely into a great blinding sheet and hurled and tore furiously apart at the window.

Overhead, the sky was a thick ashen-gray, no rent there, holding behind it a promise of the lost sunshine,—no faintest line of blue, curdling into some silver gray rift at the edge of the horizon,—but one dead, desolate, ashen sky.

I had come to the window in a blind, groping for sympathy, guidance, somewhere, and I generally found this in nature. She had been a kind mother to me from my childhood ; but to day she had no gifts of comfort or wisdom for me, either in her skies or earth. The dumb anguish there was like the dumb anguish in my soul. I drew my hand over my eyes ; and sitting there, the voice came to me, seeming to pierce down into the core of my fear and despair, and to infuse some new strength, courage, power into my soul.

So across all the darkness a voice had called to me, as sooner or later the sweet west wind would call to the rain and the clouds, and the one would ease, and the other would fold up its robes and follow, as my soul followed that other voice which had called to me, for I rose, and walking up and down my room, said,—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?"

And, as I walked, the path of the future rose slowly, and cleared itself before me. I saw it stretching its straight, steadfast line through the years, turning neither right nor left, like some turnpike, with cool, pleasant meadows on either side, but which itself lies blank, dusty, bare in the sunshine.

I was only twenty-three at this time,—younger in heart and in face than in years. Such a future as this to live day by day down into old age, could not have looked attractive to any young, enthusiastic girl-woman, for I was this then.

As it opened and spread clearly before me, my heart sickened and recoiled from it. Was

this to be my future—this blank, hard, toil-some life! Out of those cold, desolate years did there blossom no days tremulous with warmth and fragrance for me; no days thrilled with vague, sweet hopes, or golden with blessed joys.

Were all the sweet dreams of my youth—the vague, eager hopes of my girlhood, to perish thus? Standing face to face with my future, my heart fainted within me for a moment.

Then I turned resolutely and faced it,—for there swept across me a vision of two fair-haired, shrinking girls, and a young boy with a brave heart and a precocious brain, and I said to myself, "Yes, I will take the way appointed me. I take this life deliberately; its duties on my soul, its work on my hands."

"They will be hard and heavy, but God helping me, I will not shrink from them. For other women there may be 'maiden hopes, and wifely trust, and mother's love'; but not for you, oh, Margaret Day!

"Into the great breach you must throw yourself; your stout heart must keep the wolf from the door. You must earn the warmth for the hearth, the bread for the mouths of these, whose youth and helplessness demand all your strength, and time, and labor.

"Look back on your sweet, lost girlhood once more, the last time. Look forward to your life and sacrifice. Live it faithfully to the end, to the grave, where you will lay it off. God has appointed it, just as He appoints to the year the sweet summer days, brimming over with sunshine, with the joy of leaves, and the song of birds, and the winter days with their gloom and blankness, and both alike do Him service.

"I will do my work, too; my hard, long, toilsome work, whenever it comes to me. I will not shrink from, nor shirk one of its duties."

So I said that day long ago. I thank God, who gave me strength sufficient for it, now.

My two nieces and nephew were all that remained of our family,—all but their father and my brother, who should have been its honor and strength,—who was instead its sorrow and its shame.

My father was a clergyman in New Hampshire; a good man, a faithful pastor in the highest sense; beloved in life, sincerely mourned in death by his people.

He had had two wives. Algernon was the son of the first, I the daughter of the last one. My brother was ten years my senior. My mother had died just as I reached my twelfth

birthday; my father followed her three years later.

Algernon had early evinced a strong tendency to a business life, and my father, although keenly disappointed, had interposed no serious obstacles to his son's indulging his own wishes in this matter. So, through the influence of friends, Algernon came to the city, and commenced his business career as one of the under clerks in a large wholesale house.

Shrewd, energetic, of attractive person and address, he was easily advanced from one position to another, until finally he became head clerk in the establishment, and married one of the partner's daughters.

A little later he was taken into the partnership, and his pretty spoiled child of a wife brought him a considerable fortune with her hand.

The world prospered with Algernon Day, and he had hardly been married a year when I came, a broken-hearted, bewildered orphan, from my parsonage-home among the mountains, to the elegant residence of my half-brother in the city, for Algernon and his wife had insisted on my coming to them after our father's death.

They were kind, Algernon in his indolent, good-natured fashion; Ellen, his wife, in her fitful, caressing, half-exacting one.

Then I was not absolutely dependent on these my only relatives, for I had inherited a few thousand from my mother.

So I was sent to the best schools, and my life soon settled down into the new channels, and was moulded after the pattern of most fashionable young ladies' lives in a large city.

So the years went on until they made me twenty. During this time a girl, a boy, and another girl, have been given to our household, and with the birth of each child the mother's health waxed feebler, until at last she drooped and died.

Poor Ellen! she drew my face down to her cold one, and made me promise, among her last words, that I would always stand between her children, and wrong and suffering.

Perhaps those dying eyes saw farther into their future than any living ones could.

After his wife's death, some subtle, gradual change seemed to come over Algernon. He was less at home. He grew absent, sullen, morose. I was always sensible of some want and limitation in his character. His character was of coarser grain than his father's, and his standpoints were always worldly ones. As my own nature developed, I was conscious of some

subtle but deep antagonism of sentiment and principle between us; but he was my brother, to whom I was sincerely attached, and I tried to smother this consciousness.

There is no use lingering on this time. As the years went over him Algernon grew reckless, went into heavy speculations, and at last involved the house, in which he was a partner, so deeply that it broke.

The whole can be told in a few sentences, not so brief that they will not hurt me to write them. My brother did not deal honestly with his partners. An investigation of his transactions might have proved him the perpetrator of some deeds which must have sent him to prison. He could not face this possibility, and collecting what funds he hastily could, he made his escape abroad, leaving his young children helpless, penniless, worse than orphans.

He had the management of my small fortune, and, of course, all that had disappeared in the general wreck.

The knowledge of my brother's guilt and desertion, and of the real state of affairs, all broke on me in a single week. What a storm was that which suddenly thundered into my youth, when it lay fair as some summer morning before me, and I not seen the storm gathering in the east, nor heard the mutterings of the thunder, until it burst suddenly on me. Homeless! penniless! helpless! Those were the bare, hard facts! There was no disguising them.

It was not for myself I cared, but for the children, too young to comprehend their loss; the young, sweet, helpless trio of children. And there was the dear mother, and my promise to her!

It was not for the sake of this though that I took the burden on my life. Those sweet, pleading faces must have held me fast if they had been no kindred of mine.

I knew the very worst at last. The house over our heads was forfeited; the furniture must be sold; and for the rest, the world was all before us where to choose.

Having elected my own task, the next matter to be settled was the way of executing it. There was little choice of ways and means, allotted me. Teaching is generally the work, which suggests itself to any woman of refinement, thrown suddenly upon her own resources for bread and shelter.

My father, during his last illness, had exhorted me to make the central purpose of my youth the obtaining of a good, sound education. I had obeyed him religiously; studied

with energy and purpose, partly because I enjoyed it, partly because it was his wish. I pondered this over in my thoughts that morning, with a new realization of the value of that dying counsel. The time had come when it was my only capital in the world.

A knock at the door suddenly broke in among my thoughts. The chambermaid brought me a couple of letters, saying, in a deprecating tone, that they had been received the night before, but she had company, and forgot to present them.

My heart was too heavy then to reprove her carelessness.

I opened the first one, listlessly; and then as I read, my heart suddenly sprang, and the blood burned up into my cheeks. It was a brief letter, somewhat formal and business-like, for its intent and purpose, for the letter contained an offer of marriage. The writer thereof was a friend of my brother's; had had some business relations with him, and had been frequently at our house. He was probably not far behind his sixtieth birthday; a pompous, somewhat stately old man; shrewd and observant withal, and who, having entered early into commercial life, had built up his own fortune into half a million.

For a time I was utterly overwhelmed at my offer. A woman has generally some intuition of the true state of affairs, before a man becomes her suitor; but in this case I was entirely absolved from a suspicion of the fact. I had frequently chatted and jested with my brother's old friend, but the faintest suspicion that this rich old man, Benjamin Torrey, ever aspired towards anything beyond the civility of a mere acquaintance, never entered my mind.

Still he had chosen the right time to make his offer; to ask me to become his wife. If there was ever a time when the darkness seemed to have closed over my head—if there was ever a time when my womanly weakness and loneliness seemed to need the strength of some human arm, the shelter of some loving heart, it was on that desolate and terrible one, which looms darkly over the years as I sit here now writing of it.

And in this great extremity both were suddenly offered me. I rumbled the dainty sheet in my fingers, which had brought me its offering of rest, home, affluence. I knew just what sort of a bargain could be consummated betwixt Benjamin Torrey, the wealthy old bachelor, and myself.

He would be proud of me; fond of me, after

a fashion. I should stand to him as the highest and fairest representation of the wealth, to amass which had been the great purpose of his life, and which was in his own eyes his chiefest glory. I should be the lady mistress of his magnificent home—for I knew the man's weakness here well; he would spare no pains nor expense in its adornment; all that my heart wished, and more, of luxury, of equipage, of splendor, would be at my command.

And then, as a husband, he might be a little whimsical, a little exacting, a little dull perhaps. But I understood him; his weaknesses, his general good nature, the vulnerable points of his character. I could humor and manage him, and as a general thing have my own way.

Do you wonder, oh my reader, that I hesitated? Do you wonder that that fair perspective of my future spread like some land of enchantment before my gaze?

I was a woman, and I loved grace, and beauty, and luxury. I was a woman, and I loved the dear delights of home, the sweet sacredness of its shelter. I loved the joy of books and the glory of pictures. I was a woman, and I wanted rest, and comfort, and ease. More than this, I was a woman most tenderly reared, accustomed to all the surroundings of wealth; a woman most shrinking and sensitive, dreading to go out alone and unprotected in the cold of the world, to do battle there with the hard, and selfish, and wicked. I dreaded labor; hard, thankless, treadmill labor day by day, which has no rest, and no change. I dreaded heartless pity, and cold contempt, and wearisome days and nights, and I said that perhaps God in His mercy had sent this man to save me from all these.

But I stopped here; what would he ask in return? Somewhat that my heart rose up and answered it had not to give, that it never would have; that no marriage vow, nor bridal ring, nor priestly blessing could ever bestow.

I knew it, when the thought of that old man's lip on my cheek thrilled a slow, recoiling shudder through me—I knew it, when all the sweet, tremulous hopes and aspirations, the deep, unsealed fountains of womanly tenderness stirred themselves in solemn, absolute denial. My soul had no gifts of frankincense and myrrh to offer at this altar. My womanhood must go up to it, and there before God and His angels sell herself with a lie. Wifely trust nor tenderness could I ever give this man. The mess of pottage might be tempting, but I would not barter my birthright. I would

not carry through all the years the sting and the shame of that so great sin. No gold could gild that inward rust eating into my life.

My soul once more asserted herself. "No," I said, "come poverty and pain, toil and starvation, if it must be. Your faces are terrible to me, but you are better than foulness or perjury, and instead thereof I take you. Plainly this door is not of God's opening!"

And just here I faltered, for a thought of the children flashed over me. Was it not my duty for their sakes to sacrifice myself here as in all other things. As the wife of Benjamin Torrey I could at last spare their childhood from the sting of poverty, and surround their youth with comfort. Perhaps I might prevail upon him after a while to receive them into our own home, which despite its grandeur must often be chill and desolate. But here again my doubts struggled themselves into clearness. No reasons, however unselfish, were sufficient to justify a marriage utterly without love or without its possibility. No ends could justify such means. I must do my duty, and God would take care of the rest.

So I took up my pen, and answered the letter of Benjamin Torrey, respectfully, kindly for the honor he had done but absolutely declining to accept it.

Then I opened the other letter. It proved to be from one of my old teachers, who still presided over a young ladies' seminary in the upper part of the city, and who had been at the commencement of the term suddenly deprived of her second assistant by the illness of the latter's brother.

My former teacher had evidently not heard of the change in our circumstances, and she wrote to inquire about a mutual friend of ours, whom she thought might be prevailed on to supply the hiatus among her teachers, at least temporarily. The duties, although involving a good deal of responsibility, would not be very arduous, and the salary was six hundred a year.

I was not long in coming to a decision here. I would write at once, acquaint my teacher with the changes which had fallen to us, and accept this situation.

The children must be sent at once to Stoneham, an old rambling town in New England, where their old nurse resided, and she would be prevailed upon to take them for love's sake, and the larger part of my salary would defray their annual expenses. It cost me many a sharp pang to make up my mind to be separated from the children; but there was no help

for it, at least for a year or two, and they would be comfortably and tenderly cared for in the old mountain town which drooped lazily down towards the shore.

Then I took up Benjamin Torrey's letter and my teacher's; in one was a life of ease, wealth, luxury; in the other, toil, poverty, privation. I remember looking at them both, wistfully, but my purpose did not falter. "I have made my choice and I will abide by it," I said.

As I rose up, I glanced out of the window. The rain had ceased. Afar off in the west there was a faint, faint line of azure, tracing itself amid great silver puffs of cloud, and the voice of the sweet south wind was calling to the clouds.

After I have come to a decision on any course, it is not in me to tarry long over its execution, but at this juncture of my life action was not only a necessity, but a relief to me. My amazed, bewildered teacher at once accepted the offer of my services. My letter to the children's old nurse brought a warm and prompt response, and a ready welcome for them to her house and heart.

In less than a week the work was all done; the children sent into the country, the furniture disposed of, and here I bear testimony that my brother's creditors behaved most generously towards the sister and the children who were worse than fatherless, and I was installed in my new work.

(CONCLUDED NEXT MONTH.)

Mrs. Gray's Sympathy.

BY M. E. ROCKWELL.

Mrs. Gray sat in her room alone. A book lay open upon her table as if she had attempted to read; some work lay upon her lap as if she were attempting to sew; but her hands dropped listlessly, while she looked from the open window, not upon the trees, shrubbery and flowers in the garden beneath it, but with a vacant, wandering gaze into the air.

"Oh dear," she said to herself, as she rocked back and forth nervously, "what is the use of trying to occupy one's hands or mind with anything? This dreadful war! How will it all end? Everything seems so sad and dark, I have no hope or courage." And her head sunk upon the work table, and her face was concealed by her hands.

A pleasant voice broke the silence, as noiseless footsteps advanced into the room. The lady who entered was perhaps thirty years of age, with a fair and pleasant face, and smooth glossy bands of brown hair, put plainly back from her forehead, under which a pair of tender, earnest eyes looked forth.

"Good morning, Mary," she said, cheerfully; but added, with some solicitude in her tones, as Mrs. Gray lifted her head and returned the salutation; "Why, what is the matter? Has anything happened to distress you? I saw Ellen going out with the children as I came in; they are well, at least."

The mother half smiled, though there were traces of tears yet upon her cheeks.

"Yes, they are well, the darlings," she said; "but oh, cousin Frank, how can you speak and look so cheerfully, while we are surrounded by such dreadful scenes? And your husband and brother both in the army too. I have not a relative personally engaged in the conflict, but it just completely overcomes me to think of it. The terrible dangers to which the soldiers are exposed! The dreadful certainties of fatigue, privation and disease! And then these long lists of killed and wounded—to what volumes of suffering they are the index. How many hearths are already desolated by death? And no one can tell how long it may last. It chills my blood to think of it, and yet I can think of nothing else."

A sudden pang seemed to convulse the features of the listener while Mrs. Gray spoke, but quickly disappeared, and she answered with a grave sweetness,

"The suffering caused by the war is very

great, indeed," she said; "it must be in all our thoughts almost constantly. But it seems to be so much the more a duty to cultivate calmness and cheerfulness of heart and manner, to meet it with fortitude, and perform the duties it enjoins upon us."

"But how is it possible," asked Mrs. Gray, "to prevent the heart sinking and sickening, and the strength failing at the thought of so much misery?"

"Do you visit the hospitals often?" asked Cousin Frank, after a short pause.

"No! I know I could not endure it. As I just said, the very thought of these things overcomes me. I try to keep from seeing them as much as possible. I scarcely dare go into the streets, or anywhere that I will be likely to meet the victims of these terrible battles."

"You are interested in some of the associations for relieving the families of poor soldiers, and providing the sick and wounded with necessaries and luxuries?"

"No! sometimes I have thought that perhaps I ought to be; but my sensibilities are so acute, that I shrink from knowing all the details of their suffering."

"Perhaps you have preferred to bestow your gifts, and perform kindly offices through your servants."

"To tell you the truth, cousin Frank, I am afraid I have not thought so much about doing these things as I ought. How can you blame me? It perfectly unnerves me when I think of the pain and distress within the walls of *one* hospital. I have not your fortitude, Frank, and the little I could do would be of no use. I could not alleviate the sufferings of *one*, when I felt that hundreds were dying around."

"My dear cousin, suppose that *one* were your husband or brother, who lay wounded, could you excuse one who might minister to him, and would not, with no better plea than you have made?"

"I had not thought of that."

"Each wounded soldier who looks up to me from his bed of suffering, is a husband, father or son of dear ones far away. Do I not owe them the duties I should expect from them if my friends were in their hands?"

"Perhaps so—yes, certainly. But it is so little that one woman can do."

"You might say with equal truth, it is so little one soldier can do for his country. Yet, if for every brave volunteer who goes forth to battle for the right, *one* courageous and tender woman would enlist for the duties she can

perform, how much suffering might be mitigated and prevented."

"But, Frank, I am afraid I cannot be one. I am not even fit for my home duties, when anything occurs to remind me of the presence in our city of these unfortunates. I saw a poor emaciated fellow go by my window on crutches this morning, and when I thought that he is only one of thousands, I felt that I could not bear it. It would be impossible for me to visit them daily as you do."

"Cousin Frank," as we have so far called Mrs. Bowman, was silent for some minutes. She remembered when she, too, shrank from contact with suffering, and tried to put afar off the realization of the scenes which war must inevitably bring. But life had gained new meanings and taught new lessons to her, since the dreadful day when her dearest ones went at the call of duty to take their places in the struggle for our country's preservation.

"God has permitted this trial to our beloved country," she said, at last; "it is a severe one in every sense, and is sifting us nationally, socially and individually. May He grant that we may be found neither among the tares or chaff! He is trying us with a refiner's fire—only pure ore can remain unconsumed! In the midst of these great changes, must not our duties be increased? Are we not responsible for the improvement of *every* opportunity of doing good? Allow me to speak plainly, Mary. Look about you. Do you not see that there is much for woman to do which cannot be done by other hands than hers? Shall we sit down helplessly and bewail suffering, because our feelings revolt and our hearts shrink at the magnitude of the work? *Feeling* is of no avail to others, no credit to ourselves, unless it prompts to *action*. Efficient, womanly courage, fortitude and calmness must be cultivated, if we do not possess them. Self-denial must put down all these timid shrinkings from distress, and rouse us to deeds, not words of sympathy and love. This morbid, self-torture which you think is sympathy renders you wretched and relieves no sufferer. The active, zealous and considerate reality will help others, and restore you to cheerfulness."

"Cheerfulness! Can one be cheerful surrounded by the dying and the dead?"

"Perhaps they are so for need of your care! Or if they must die, and you can bear the last messages to loved ones, soften the mortal agony, and accompany the departing soul with a prayer—is not this food for cheerfulness?"

"But I have no self-control in view of such —we are in His hands, let Him do with us as dreadful things."

"You will find that feeling rapidly disappearing, when you have spent one hour amid such scenes, or in the homes of the widows and orphans. Try it at least, dear Mary, and believe me, you will forget all personal fear or repugnance in your desire to render consolation to others. You will forget the pain of sympathy, and remember only its uses."

"Well, I *will* try. Call for me when you are going, and I will accompany you where you please. But, Frank, how can you speak and act so calmly in view of the terrors of war? I see in it nothing but a terrible visitation of wrath, a fearful scourge. How can we help being appalled and crouching to earth in our terror and humility? What irretrievable mistake or unpardonable sin has brought such a national calamity?"

"I think little of it in that way—as little as possible. It has been sent—it is here. I am a woman, and one who has paid little heed to political and governmental intricacies. But I believe our own to be the best and holiest government earth has ever seen. Whether the present threatening storm has been the result of the mistakes of honest, but misguided men, the wild, impracticable schemes of fanatics, or the cool, deeply laid intrigues of heartless and unscrupulous traitors, our *duty* remains the same. Our country's life is threatened. We believe that good, brave and noble men are striving to protect her. In their hands, with prayer, and faith that God is above all, we must leave her. Our *duty* as Christian women in this great crisis are apart from all questions of the past. Help to suffering humanity, steadfast performance of each daily recurring task, self-forgetfulness, self-denial, self-sacrifice upon the altar of charity, these are all before us. God help us to choose them rather than childish inaction, useless complaint, and forebodings of evil. The cheerfulness which you think unattainable is the natural result of such a choice. The consciousness of having by ever so little lightened the weight of sorrow and toil our soldiers are so nobly bearing; of striving day by day to purify and ennoble our hearts and lives, to perform duty fearlessly and faithfully, and so trusting 'our Father' for the results of what He has permitted, cannot fail to gladden our hearts even in the darkest hour of grief. There is an eternal right, a perishable wrong, and the conflict between them must be comparatively short. We know in whom we trust."

seemeth good unto Him."

There was a long silence, and Mrs. Gray rose, and stood looking at her friend with heightened color, and a new resolution speaking from her face.

"Yes," she said, "I have been cruelly and selfishly indifferent, while I regarded my selfish feeling as meritorious; I have been proud of my sensitiveness, and thought those who spoke and acted calmly were 'cold-hearted.' But I will no longer shrink from filling my place, the place to which God is calling us all by His providence. Command me for any service you wish. I will try to do my duty henceforth."

It was no idle promise. Mary Gray neglected no home-duty—wastes no more time in unavailing murmurs and forebodings. Every moment is employed in the work she has chosen. And she is happy even in the midst of gloom and doubt, when she reflects that in nowise can higher praise or blessing be bestowed than that she hopes to merit—"She hath done what she could."

Out in the World.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

CHAPTER XX.

Mrs. Woodbine was entertaining some friends in her parlor, when a servant came in and said there was a lady in the hall who wished to speak to her. It was Mrs. Jansen. She stood, shrinking near the vestibule door. Mrs. Woodbine met her with a coldly polite air, very much as she would have met a stranger who had called to ask a servant's character. She did not even offer her hand to Madeline, on whose part there was as reserved and distant a manner.

"Have you a letter for me?" A sadness crept into the speaker's voice in spite of her effort to seem calmly indifferent.

Mrs. Woodbine shook her head.

"No communication of any kind?"

"None."

In a half hesitating, half lingering way, Mrs. Jansen stood for some moments, then moving back into the vestibule, she said—

"Good morning."

"Good morning," returned Mrs. Woodbine; and the vestibule door shut on the retiring visitor.

This was on the day after Mrs. Jansen left Philadelphia.

"Who do you think it was?" said Mrs. Woodbine, on returning to the parlor.

"Who?" asked two or three ladies at once.

"Mrs. Jansen."

"No!"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you ask her in?"

Mrs. Woodbine shut her lips, looked painfully mysterious, and shook her head slowly.

"Anything wrong about her?"

"I'm afraid so."

"What have you heard?"

"Nothing that you can just put your hands on. But, I've had hints and intimations; a word here and a word there; which, all put together, have an unpleasant look. She hasn't fallen into the right kind of company—whether this be her fault or her misfortune, I cannot say. The fact is so far against her. We judge of people, you know, by their companions."

"What did she want?"

Mrs. Woodbine lifted her eyebrows.

"A letter from her husband."

"You are jesting."

"No. 'Have you a letter for me?' That

was her question. I will explain. Six months ago, as you are aware, she left her husband. I was her friend, and opposed her in every possible way; but she was stubborn and self-willed, and would listen to no reason. In going away from her husband, she wrote him a letter, in which she said, that unless he sent for her to come back, she would never return. My house was given as the place where any communication would reach her. She had, I can't understand why, counted on making it her head quarters! But she was doomed to disappointment in that. Her call to-day shows, that she still clings to the hope of hearing from her husband. But, her hope is vain. He is just as strong-willed as Mrs. Jansen. I warned her that she was playing a desperate game, with all the chances against her. It has come out as I expected."

"When was she here last?"

"About three months ago."

"Where has she been, during the time?"

"Can't say."

"Away from the city?"

"Possible." Mrs. Woodbine affected to know more than she cared to divulge.

"How did she look?"

"Badly."

"In what respect?"

"Her face was much thinner than I had ever seen it, and had an anxious expression. She looked ten years older than she appeared on the day she left her husband. She always dressed elegantly, as you are aware. The contrast in her appearance to-day was painful. She had on a dark straw bonnet, with plain brown trimming; a merino dress, and a cloth mantle that had seen considerable service. Almost any one would have passed her in the street for a servant."

"How has the mighty fallen! And yet, I pity her from my heart," said one of the ladies. "Her husband is a brute, I am told."

"No," answered Mrs. Woodbine. "Not a brute. That word expresses too much. He is, like most men, a self-sufficient tyrant, and looks down upon a woman as an inferior being. If his wife had not been a silly, self-willed little fool, she might have got along with him. But, she was too proud to bend the tenth part of a degree out of her fine perpendicularity. She would not stoop to manage him—O no! Home, happiness, reputation before the world, were nothing in her eyes when set in opposition to her pride. No bending for her. She would stand erect or break, and so she broke! Well, I have no patience with such people. Faith-

fully, as in duty bound, I warned and remonstrated; but she let my words pass as the idle winds. Now she must go her own way; and I fancy she will find it rougher than was imagined."

Slowly Mrs. Jansen descended the steps, up which she had gone a few moments before, with a faint hope glimmering in her mind. That hope was dead! Slowly she moved away, her veil drawn closely about her face. At the next corner she found herself face to face with her husband. Suddenly her feet stood still. The power of motion was gone. But, her dress and thick veil proved a complete disguise. He passed her, without a pause. His name was on her lips. Under a wild impulse she tried to call after him. But her tongue was, for the instant, paralyzed. Standing, moveless as an image, she gazed after his receding form, until it was lost to sight; then, with hard shut mouth, deathly pale face, and hands clenched so tightly that the nails almost cut the flesh, she passed on her indeterminate way.

CHAPTER XXI.

"I will give her one year to repent and return."

On the third day after Madeline's departure, Carl Jansen had reached this decision. It meant, that he would not break up their home until twelve months had expired.

"The door shall not be fastened against her; but, if it opens to let her in, her own hand must give the pressure. She went out of her own will; and of her own will she must return."

To this purpose, feeling and thought had crystallized.

The year had closed. It found Jansen with clearly visible pain-marks on his face. Cold, resolute, self-approving, he had kept to his decision without wavering until the full period given to his wife had expired; but, it was not in human nature to go through such a year without intense suffering. He had taken many draughts from a bitter cup, and the drugged potion had fevered his blood in heart and brain. The loneliness, the desolation of hope, the restless disquietude, the doubt, the questionings, the uncertainty of this period, would have left disfiguring signs on one of sterner stuff than Carl Jansen.

The year had closed. Nothing had been changed, as to the external order of things, in the household, during all that time. Not a drawer or wardrobe belonging to Madeline

had been meddled with. If she had returned, on any day of the year, she would have found everything that was personally her own, just where she had left it. But, the fixed time had closed. No matter what change of feeling had taken place with Jansen towards his wife; no matter as to what evil-hearted rumor had reported; no matter as to how far belief had accepted slander; up to the last day and hour, he remained true to his first intention—"I will give her one year to repent and return."

The year had closed, and now there must come a change. This state of things was no longer possible. He must destroy this marred and desecrated temple which had been erected to the household gods—must pull down these altars from which the holy fires had long ago departed. Through the last night of the last day, nothing was disturbed. A vague, restless pause in Jansen's life, seemed like the shadow of that coming presence for which through a long year he had waited. Up to the final instant of grace, he would keep the door of entrance unfastened. But, all was at last over. A new day in the new year of his fate began; and the door was barred!

Three large trunks, locked and strapped down, contained at the close of this day all the clothing and personal effects of Madeline, once the beloved wife of Carl Jansen, now self-repudiated, and a wanderer out in the world; where, and under what circumstances, the husband knew not. Upon their contents, he had gazed for the last time. Nothing would ever induce him again to touch or look upon the garments in which she had often appeared so beautiful in his eyes. He had shivered with many sudden ague-fits, as one article after another, passing under his hands, had quickened bright memories of the past, and set the beautiful being he had once clasped with such tender joy to his heart against a background of all things pure and lovely.

The purpose of Jansen was, to send these trunks to Madeline; and now, for the first time since her abandonment of home, he began making inquiries in regard to her. With an almost business-like coldness of purpose, he settled in his mind the proper methods of procedure, and then went to work systematically. First, he called on Mrs. Woodbine. That lady gave him a courteous reception, and freely answered all his inquiries; but could give no information as to Madeline's present abode.

"When did you last see or hear from her?" asked Jansen.

"I have neither seen her, nor heard from her in six months. In fact, sir, she has kept away from me ever since she took that fatal step. Before, her visits were frequent. But, I did not approve the course she was taking, and urged her so strongly to go back, that she became offended."

"You saw her six months ago?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"She called here one day about that time."

"Ah! For what purpose?"

"To ask if there was a letter for her."

"A letter! Did she receive letters directed to your care?"

"None ever came here for her."

"From whom did she expect a letter?"

"From you."

"From me!" The surprise on Mr. Jansen's part was not feigned.

"Yes, sir. When she went away from home, she left a letter, so she told me, in which she informed you, that if you would write to her and say 'Come back,' she would return. She fully counted, I think, on your taking her at her word. She expected a letter, and the invitation to come back. For full six months, as is plain from her calling here, did she cherish this hope."

A deep, irrepressible sigh, struggled up from the breast of Carl Jansen. He sat very still and silent for some moments, his face turned partly away from Mrs. Woodbine, who was observing him with the keen eye of a curious woman.

"In which she was doomed to disappointment," he said, in a low, husky voice, speaking as if to himself.

"Bitter, heart-aching disappointment," said Mrs. Woodbine.

"You think so?" Jansen looked up almost with a start.

"I know it. Nothing but pride kept her from going back. If you had opened the door for her, even so much as an inch, she would have crowded through. You were too hard and unyielding, Mr. Jansen. You did not understand the woman you had asked, in her tender, confiding girlhood, to become your wife. She was loving and true, but proud and self-willed. You should have considered the whole of her character—should have let the good overbalance defect. It was a hard thing in you as her husband, to drive her as you did to desperation. Before heaven, sir, you are not guiltless in this matter! If she suffer harm, a cast-out and a wanderer in this hard

and evil world, something of the sin will lie at your door. Pardon this plain speech, Mr. Jansen; but I am an outspoken woman; and it may be well for you to know what others think of your conduct."

"By my own act I am willing to stand or fall," replied Mr. Jansen, with slight signs of displeasure. "A husband may, surely, have freedom to approve or disapprove of his wife's conduct; and even to speak strongly if she set herself defiantly against him. I did no more than this—and simply for this she went away, thinking to force me into concessions which no man with a true, manly character will ever make. Of her own will she left her home. The door was not locked against her. At any time within the last twelve months she could have returned. She had only to push open the door she had closed herself. But, not choosing to do so—not willing to bend the neck of her self-will—she remained on the outside. Who is to blame? Not Carl Jansen! His conscience is clear on that head. But, excuse me, Mrs. Woodbine, I had rather not go on with this discussion. The argument will be fruitless on either side. Madeline called here, you say, about six months ago?"

"Yes, sir."

"And asked for a letter?"

"Yes, sir."

"Had you any conversation with her at the time?"

"None. The interview was brief. She did not come in."

"Do you know where she went, after leaving your house?"

"No, sir."

"Have you heard of her since?"

"Nothing directly."

"What indirectly?"

Mrs. Woodbine thought for a little while.

"It must be over three months ago, that I heard a lady say that she met her, or a person singularly like her, on one of the Albany boats going up the river."

"And beyond this, you know nothing?"

"Nothing at all, Mr. Jansen."

"Perhaps you know of some one who might be able to give me the clue for which I am seeking."

"She was, for a while, very intimate with a woman named Mrs. Windall; and, I am told, went away from the city with her seven or eight months ago."

"Who is Mrs. Windall?"

"Not a very good kind of person, I regret to say. She is an adventurer, and, I think,

attached herself to your wife in the hope of using her in some way to her own advantage. It was intimated, at one time, that she was training Mrs. Jansen for a public reader, or to go on the stage. Indeed, the story runs, that a public reading was given in Boston, or Philadelphia. But, I cannot vouch for this."

"How can I find Mrs. Windall?"

"She has not been seen in New York for a long time."

"Is there any one who is likely to know her address?"

"She staid for awhile, I believe, with a Mrs. Barling, in Jersey City. Your wife was there also, now that I remember. Mrs. Windall and Mrs. Barling trained her, so I have heard, for elocutionary readings."

"Do you know Mrs. Barling's exact location in Jersey City?"

"I do not."

Mr. Jansen went away, feeling less comfortable in mind than when he called. Some things said by Mrs. Woodbine went down to sore places and hurt; and some things disturbed the self-approving states which he had formed. He was not so well satisfied with himself—not so sure that he had been altogether right in his dealings with Madeline.

His interview with Mrs. Barling did not help his state of mind. She corroborated what Mrs. Woodbine had suggested, and gave him the particulars of Madeline's appearance at the Musical Fund Hall in Philadelphia. In fact, read to him the letter of Mrs. Windall, in which she gave a description of Madeline's brilliant success, and subsequent disappearance. As Mrs. Jansen did not return to her house, nor communicate with her, Mrs. Barling could not furnish any present information in regard to Madeline. Nor was she able to give the address of Mrs. Windall.

Next he called upon Mrs. Lawrence, in Brooklyn. To his inquiry as to when she had seen his wife, he received the answer—

"She was here in the Spring."

"How long did she remain?"

"Only an hour or two."

"Have you met with her since?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know where she is at this present time?"

Mrs. Lawrence answered in the negative, further remarking, that she believed it was her intention to leave the city. "She was not communicative," Mrs. Lawrence said. "I

pressed her with questions as to her future; but all her answers were vague. I do not think she had any settled plans. She was very unhappy. My heart ached for her. What have you heard, Mr. Jansen?"

"Nothing! She has never had any communication with me since she went away. I am entirely ignorant of her condition or locality. My present desire is, to get her address, in order to send her three trunks containing her clothing and personal effects. If you should learn anything about her, will you be kind enough to let me know?"

"If I hear of her, you shall know it immediately," said Mrs. Lawrence.

Observing a certain sternness in Mr. Jansen, amounting almost to anger towards his wife, this kind, true friend of the unhappy woman felt called upon to say a word for her early and beloved companion.

"I do not wish to intrude upon you," she said, "in a matter so painful and delicate; but you must permit me to speak in favor of one whom I have known intimately and loved tenderly."

Mr. Jansen knit his cold brows, but Mrs. Lawrence went on.

"There is among most men and women, a bad inclination to suppose evil instead of good,—to give to each other's acts the worst instead of the best interpretation. I trust you are keeping this in mind. A woman standing to society in Mrs. Jansen's unfortunate relation, would be evil spoken of, were she as pure as an angel. Don't forget this, and if any evil surmise, or positive assertion of wrong, comes to your ears, do not give it credence. She erred sadly in leaving her home. As to the extent of mutual blame, I know nothing; but I will not believe her to have been all wrong and you all right. I must say this in the cause of my friend, and of my sex. A woman of her pure, true and loving nature, would never have broken away so madly from a home in which all material good abounded, if there had not been laid upon her some things intolerable to be borne."

"Excuse me," said Mr. Jansen, rising. "The past is past, and we will not uncover it. I understand my own position thoroughly, and, of course, better than you or any one else can understand it. My conscience is clear in the matter."

"Nay, excuse me, sir! Sit down again, and hear me for my friend," answered Mrs. Lawrence, with that mild resolution which subdues quicker than anger. "I will not be rude nor

insulting. What I desire is, to speak for her on the side of kindness and charity. There will be enough to whisper detraction—to suggest evil—to assert as facts the mere creations of a vile fancy. For a night and a day she was with me after leaving your house. I looked away down in her heart, and scanned it with a jealous fear that something evil might be lurking there,—something disloyal to her husband, I mean, and to her marriage vows. I found pride and self-will, but not impurity—not disloyalty. These were her words. I shall not soon forget them. She said, 'As a wife and equal, I will cling to my husband through good and evil report—in sickness, poverty, disgrace—under any and all circumstances of outside wrong and oppression. His *love* would bind me by cords impossible to be broken.' Again she said, 'If my husband writes to me, and says, simply, Come back, I will accept it *gladly* as an evidence that I am to live with him as an equal. If he does not ask my return—will not concede anything—then the die is cast—we stand apart forever.' Ah, sir, not to many men are given a woman of her high quality. Alas! that you did not comprehend her. As your loving equal, she would have stood up by your side, brave and strong, amid the direst calamities—a wife of whom the proudest might be proud. If you could have had faith in her—if you could have understood her, and wisely forbore where opposition could only blind! She was not perfect. Are you and I? But she was loving, and pure, and true. Let evil tongues speak what they may; all are liars who touch her name with a vile word! I who knew her as girl and woman; I who have looked down deeper into her heart, as to some of its hidden chambers, than even her husband, say this boldly in the face of all. Ah, sir! she has taken up a heavy burden; and, in all your thought of her in the time to come, Mr. Jansen, do not forget that your hands helped to make that burden, nor that a single word from your lips would have lifted it from her shoulders. My heart so aches for her, that I say boldly under the excitement of pain what otherwise could not have passed my lips. O, sir! Let me conjure you to bend a little from your high position. Will you not say to her those two little words for which I know she has been all the time thirsting in this desert of her life—"Come back?" They would thrill through her desolate soul! By all that is sacred in life, I implore you to speak those words!"

"It is too late!" answered Carl Jansen; the

sternness of manner he strove to assume broken and veiled by conflicting emotions. For several painful moments the husband and friend of Madeline stood gazing into each other's eyes. Then the interview closed. Silently bowing, Jansen retired. He had not felt so miserable since the day of Madeline's departure.

CHAPTER XXII.

Weeks gathered themselves into months, but no tidings of his wife came to Carl Jansen. All inquiry proved fruitless. She had dropped away from public observation, like a pebble in the sea, and not even a ripple was left to guide the searcher.

Jansen did not hesitate in the work of dismembering his home. At a public sale, every thing was dispersed, not an article being left to remind him of a desolated paradise. Madeline's three trunks were stored, in order to be sent whenever the place of her retirement was discovered. Previous to this, no very marked change had appeared in Jansen. He was only a little graver in manner. The excitement always attendant on a state of uncertainty, had kept him up. But, now that all this waiting and uncertainty were over,—now that he had taken down the household altar, and dispersed its broken fragments—he experienced a sense of desolation that was almost intolerable. The foundation upon which he had builded his temple of earthly happiness was removed; the temple was gone; and he was out in the sun and storm, shelterless. Every one noticed a change in Carl Jansen after this. Inward working pain cut its signs upon his features. He was reserved beyond his wont—absent minded—shy of company. This state continued for over a year, during which period no intelligence came to him of Madeline. He had long ceased to make any inquiries in regard to her.

About this time he caused notice of a suit for divorce to be given. The plea was desertion. No response came; and in due legal course the marriage contract was annulled. So far as external bonds were concerned, Carl Jansen stood free again. But, was he conscious of interior freedom? Did all stand with him as it had stood before his promise in the sight of heaven, to love and cherish Madeline so long as life should last? Was she really nothing to him now, more than any other woman? Could he think of her as indifferently as he could think of others? No! that was impossible! The divorce had not made him free—could not

make him free. It was not in the power of legislatures nor courts to break inward bonds—to satisfy conscience—to put a man right with God and his own spirit, when he was wrong interiorly.

Carl Jansen had intended to put all the former things of his life behind him. This act of legal separation was to restore the status which existed prior to marriage. Alas! for his peace of mind; it wrought no such magical result. There lived a woman, where he did not know, with whom he had stood at the altar, and exchanged vows of lasting fidelity. He knew of nothing against her purity of life; of nothing that could work a plenary separation, and so an interior divorce. There had been incompatibilities; jarrings and alienations,—but all flowing from lack of self-discipline on one side or the other. It was the evil things of the unregenerate mind that were to be separated—divorced—not the living souls. Somewhere, in teachings by pulpit or press, this truth had found its way into his mind, and it proved troublesome. It was a sword flashing before his eyes, or cutting down into his life. It would not let him be at peace.

It took all of another year for the crust to harden over this new state of feeling. In the meantime he had gone more into society; and as he was a man of good personal appearance, known integrity of character, and in excellent circumstances, many fair lips smiled upon him, and many bright eyes sought to win him by their magic. But, he was not of easy fascination. There was ever a disturbing inner consciousness of a woman's claim upon him, yet uncanceled, that sat itself against all these allurements.

The time came when all the past was so hidden from view, that Carl Jansen could look upon another woman with loving eyes, and draw near to her with loving words. From among the fair beings who crossed his way, he selected Margaret Williams as the best and worthiest to hold the high relation of a wife. He chose with a keen perception of womanly qualities; but sought to mate with one who had loftier views of marriage than he possessed. His offer was declined. Now, Jansen was not of that class of persons who, when they make up their minds to attain a certain end, are easily baffled. He was not over sensitive, and the denial of his suit did not, therefore, wound his pride very deeply. He saw in Miss Williams a woman above all others desirable for a wife; and he meant to gain her for himself if that

were possible. "Faint heart never won fair lady," he said to himself, and pressed his suit again. This time, Margaret Williams gave him something more than a simple refusal.

"Sir," she answered, sternly, "have I not once said no! Mr. Jansen, others may think as they please, but I regard an offer of marriage from *you* as little better than an insult! Do you understand me?"

Her eyes flashed with unwonted fire.

"An insult! No, I do not understand you."

"You have a wife, sir!"

Carl Jansen turned pale.

"God's law is above all human law," said Miss Williams. "What God joins, it is not for man to put asunder until divine law works a separation. I have not heard that this is so in your case. You gave in no plea but that of desertion; and this works to no annulling of the marriage bond in the sight of heaven. Sir, your offer of marriage sent a shudder through my soul! And, now that you have presumed on its repetition, I make bold to say what another might hesitate to declare."

Jansen essayed a feeble argument, but Miss Williams waved her hand that he might keep silence, and then turned from him with a cold dignity of manner that scarcely veiled her contempt and aversion. He never troubled her again.

But all the women he met did not possess the pure instincts and high principle of Margaret Williams. There were plenty who, fixing their eyes on lower and more worldly things than she made primary in marriage, were ready to meet him in exchange of vows and obligations the most sacred and the most vital to the soul's well being and peace of any that are made. Jansen did not lack discrimination—was no dull reader of character. He saw the wide difference between this class of women and the class represented by Margaret Williams; and for a time held himself away from the sphere of their attractions. Moreover, the outspoken rebuke which she had administered did not die upon his ears like murmurs of the idle wind; but quickened his thought into perceptions that troubled his peace.

Time moved on. Jansen, standing lonely in the world, strongly desired companionship. Because of an unhappy experience in marriage—because of one sad shipwreck—must there be no further venture? He did not believe in this necessity of the case. His nature rose against it in protest. He wanted

a home—domestic associations—a family in which he might embosom himself. Once more in his life, all the beautiful ideals of marriage and its felicities crowded his imagination. Ardor of feeling began to obscure his judgment; and, finally, he made an offer of his hand to one who, contrasted at first in his thought with Margaret Williams, dropped below the line of even respectful consideration. She was but a woman of the world, beside whom, as to fine instincts and capacities for womanly development, Madeline was a being of higher order.

How it fared with him in this new relation, we shall see.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Out in the World.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

CHAPTER XXIII.

There was nothing coarse or sensual about Carl Jansen. If he was not very sensitive, he yet had a refinement of character that gave delicate perceptions, and which, but for his mistaken notions about marital prerogative, and his cold, self-will, would have lifted him into a just appreciation of Madeline's pure and sweet quality of mind. If he had not been so foolish and blind, he would have looked through all exterior veils, and recognized in her his own ideal of woman. This was seen in the beginning; but pride and passion had dimmed his sight.

We shall not dwell on the incidents attending his second alliance. Women of the class represented by Margaret Williams, could not stoop to one holding his questionable relation to the sex. They recognized in marriage something more than a good external arrangement. They wanted the man as seen by interior light; and not the man as he stood before the world. And so, Carl Jansen was compelled to choose from among the meaner natures—to take into the closest of all human relations a woman of inferior quality; one without pure instincts or noble impulses; one who smiled on him because he was rich and respectable; and married him to secure ease, luxury, and a position.

It did not take Jansen long to discover his mistake; and with the discovery came a sense of weakness never felt before. In the case of Madeline, he knew that he had a being of sensitive spirit to deal with, and therefore had encouragement to act against her when she stood in his way; but, it soon became apparent that his new wife was of a different organization. Not less self-willed, but of such coarse quality, that he found himself bruised in the first conflict. The relation of sensitiveness was transferred. While in proof armor against most of the weapons he might bring, every thrust she made penetrated the quivering flesh.

There were periods during the first year of this incongruous union, when Jansen's repulsion towards his wife was so strong, that he felt impelled to disregard all bonds, and shake off the dust from his garments against her. But, many worldly and selfish motives came in to restrain him. Once in this time she was attacked by a dangerous illness, when there

came into his heart the wish that she might die. As this desire took form in his mind, Jansen was startled, and sought to drive it away. But it would not be cast out; and when the crisis was past, and she began to recover, he stood face to face with an irrepressible regret, the existence of which showed him the magnitude of his error.

The spirit moulds the flesh. A coarse nature takes of the coarser elements to build its earthly tabernacle, and builds after the pattern of its meaner ideals. In the spring-time of life, when the active forces lie near the age of innocence and purity, a finer selection is made, and so we have beauties of the flesh that are not in correspondence with the mind's true quality. But, after the early days of manhood and womanhood, when the age of freedom and reason comes into fulness, a new order prevails, and then we begin to see changes, that often bring surprise, disappointment and pain.

Such changes began with Jansen's second wife soon after their marriage. The body undergoes perpetual recreations. There is decay and new formation daily. Old things are being all the while put off and new things taken on. But in the spirit we have all that is real and substantial; and according to its quality will be the earthly garment it assumes. If we see men and women growing coarse, vulgar, and sensual-looking as they grow older, we shall scarcely err in our estimate of their quality, should we conclude that coarseness and sensuality appertain to the spirit. If they become more refined; if we see the original, harder textures of their flesh growing translucent with revelations of inner life and beauty, shall we be less in error if we say that with all such the spirit is growing purer and more truly human?

The new wife of Carl Jansen did not thus grow beautiful in his eyes; but changed, as the years progressed, into a grosser and grosser image of selfishness and sensuality. It was remarked by those who observed Jansen closely, that while his wife's face grew coarser, his grew more refined; yet with a blending of sadness and disappointment in all the lineaments. He was graver, quieter, more abstracted. No wonder; for he stood daily confronted with a great life-error, and knew that the time for its correction was gone beyond recall. If he could have forgotten the past—forgotten Madeline—the case would have been lighter for him. But, memory, as the years crept on, seemed to grow more distinct.

Children were born of this union—three sons and two daughters. It is not often that either men or women, in approaching marriage, think about mental and moral qualities as reproduced in offspring. If this were soberly considered in the light of reason, many would draw back, and re-consider the whole question involved, before taking a step so fraught with good or evil consequences. In Coventry Patmore's "Faithful Forever," Mrs. Graham, in writing to Frederick, touches the key note to this subject, when she says—

"Nor would she bring you up a brood
Of strangers, bound to you by blood,
Boys of a meaner moral race,
Girls with their mother's evil grace."

The brood in Carl Jansen's home partook largely of the mother's meaner quality and evil grace. As she had never governed herself from any principle of honor or high breeding—had never put mental rein on appetite, impulse, or passion—her nature manifested itself, strongly at first, in the children. The father's character showed scarcely a sign of reproduction. But, that lay in the beginning out of sight. It was a hidden and more interior life, to become active in later years.

The beauty, the grace, the sweetness of childhood, as they appear in some homes, were not seen in that of Mr. Jansen. When his babes first lifted their soft blue eyes, so full of light from heaven, and smiled at him, the father's heart leaped in its gladness, and overflowed with promise. Alas! that the promise was never fulfilled. Too soon the mother's evil grace appeared—the taint of coarseness—the sensuality—the mean and low proclivities, that, under disorderly conditions at home, it was found impossible to repress.

Mrs. Jansen had no system or government with her children; and so they grew up like "wild asses' colts." All attempts at restraint on the father's part, when at home, were in some way thwarted, or set at naught by the mother. If he attempted punishment, she was almost certain to interfere; if he laid down laws, she permitted their infraction. Her very manner of treating him before the children, diminished their respect for his authority. It was a common thing for her to scout his opinions, and make light of his suggestions. If he became angry, and spoke with firmness or passion, she never failed of coarse retort. If he assumed an attitude of command, she either defied him or laughed in his face.

Alas for Carl Jansen! He had driven from him a woman moulded of finest material—a

woman of tender and true impulses—a woman who held the sweetness of love in her heart as a rose holds its perfume—and in her place had consorted with a clod from a human valley!

CHAPTER XXIV.

Ten years of such a life, separating itself daily more and more from all true sources of enjoyment—from all the satisfactions and delights after which the soul thirsts—wrought severely upon the bodily and mental health of Carl Jansen. A too intense absorption of his thoughts in business was added to the undermining forces. At thirty-six, he found himself failing; at forty, he was an invalid—broken in spirit as well as broken in health.

Now it was that his heart began to yearn intensely for that care and tender consideration which was denied. The strong, exacting, self-willed man felt himself growing weaker daily, and less and less able to compel the service which love failed to give. Hearty, coarse and strong, Mrs. Jansen had a kind of animal contempt for the weakness of her husband. Physical superiority gave her a sense of mental and moral superiority. Daily, he seemed dwarfing at her side; and she soon came to regard him as of little more consequence than a sickly boy, full of whims, wants, and petty exactions, that were to be treated more by the rule of denial than favor.

At this period of his life, when its bitterness was fresh to his revolting taste, Jansen often dreamed of Madeline. She came to him, in vision, always as his wife—young, beautiful, and lovingly ministrant. Her hand smoothed and softened his pillow, and held refreshing draughts to his thirsty lips. She comforted him in weakness and pain with tender words and heart-warm kisses. What sad, hopeless, self-accusing awakenings followed these sweet dreams, that so mocked the painful reality!

Steadily disease kept on, sapping the foundations of life. Physicians enjoined entire withdrawal from business, and change of air. During the milder seasons, travel was recommended as of more avail than medicine. So trade was relinquished, and Mr. Jansen devoted himself to the work of acquiring health. In this, partial success would have been gained, if Mrs. Jansen had given to her husband's case the just consideration it demanded. But, he was not first in her thoughts. A lover of self and a lover of the world, she had gained the position and the wealth for which she had married him; and, as a natural result, the man through whom these most desirable things

were reached, fell into the back ground as of minor consideration.

Mrs. Jansen was pleased with the idea of travelling about and seeing the world. She had always expressed a desire to visit Europe—to see Paris—"Dear, delightful Paris!" as she said. But, in giving way to professional advice, and closing up his business, Jansen had not contemplated the excitement and fatigue of a tour in Europe. A quiet residence of weeks by the sea shore, alternating with weeks among the mountains—rest of body and mind—these were, in his thought, the limitations of at least the first season of leisure. The sole end in view with him was health. But Mrs. Jansen scarcely thought of this. Her husband's failing health brought the opportunity she had long desired, and she was eager to embrace it.

There are occasions when the will of the weakest stands as a wall of iron against all opposition, and cannot be borne down. It was so with Mr. Jansen in this case—at least during the first year or two after giving up business. His wife was resolved on a trip across the Atlantic, and he was just as resolute in his purpose not to go. The power was in his hands, and he maintained it, in spite of the bitterest and most persevering assaults. But, the contest robbed him of that mental repose so essential to his bodily condition. The days were all either stormy or cloudy. No tranquillity; no sunshine. If the selfish, wilful wife could not have her way, she could at least have her revenge, and there was no intermission of her evil work, for there was no softness nor pity in her heart towards any who crossed her purposes. There are a thousand ways in which an unfeeling wife may torture a husband, whose strength of mind and body is waning. Mrs. Jansen never failed in this cruel work. To neglect and indifference, she added the chafings of ill-temper, and a systematic opposition to whatever he might desire or suggest. Their children were growing up undisciplined, self-willed, and spoiled by indulgence; yet, in every attempt at correction he was baffled by his wife, and his authority set at naught through her persistent interference. She was perpetually degrading him in their eyes; and they were daily learning to regard him with indifference, if not contempt. A part of this result was due to his own peevish and fretful states. If he had been a strong man interiorly, there would have been, in reserve, powers of mind ready to adapt themselves to this new condition of things. An

unselfish love for his children would have manifested itself in forms that were attractive instead of repellent. He would have gained a power over them for good, that must have largely counterbalanced their mother's evil influence. But, he had not gained that moral wisdom which is born of self-denial. He had not the sweetness of ripened fruit. If you tasted him, it was to find him yet bitter and sour.

Mr. Jansen wished to spend the first summer after his emancipation from business, in Minnesota and the north-west. His physician strongly recommended the pure, invigorating air of the Upper Mississippi. But, Mrs. Jansen would hear to no such thing.

"If you go," she said, positively, "you go alone."

Going alone did not suit Mr. Jansen. He was weak and depressed in spirits. Two or three slight hemorrhages from the lungs had not only alarmed him, but made him unwilling to leave home unaccompanied by his wife. Saratoga and Newport, if not the Continent,—Mrs. Jansen would hear to nothing else. Mr. Jansen pleaded for a quiet sea shore season at a less fashionable watering place than Newport, but his wife was immovable. To Saratoga, accompanied by their two oldest children, coarse, hoydenish girls of fourteen and sixteen, they went and passed a few weeks. Then they migrated to Newport, where Mrs. Jansen displaying herself in rich attire and flashing jewels, excited contempt and criticism, which she fancied to be envy and admiration. Poor Jansen was treated with the most shameless neglect and indifference by his wife. Saratoga water and sea-bathing had not helped him in any way. Their hygienic virtues were not strong enough to overcome the depressing effects of fatigue, excitement, and the perpetual exasperation of mind consequent on the behaviour of his wife and daughters in public. They were all the while shocking his more delicate sense of proprieties. The red spots that stained his cheeks were as much symptomatic of mental as physical irritation.

One day, Mr. Jansen was sitting alone on the porch of the hotel—he was alone for most of his time, neither wife nor daughters finding in his society the companionship that pleased them—when he was seized with a more than usually violent fit of coughing, which continued for a considerable time in spite of all his efforts to control it. A tough mucus had collected on the lining membrane along the bronchial tubes, that he found it diffi-

cult to dislodge; and as he was feeling unusually weak, this cough seriously exhausted him. He was near a window that opened into one of the parlors, and, before this paroxysm, had been listening to the prattle of a child within; unseen, because the blind was down. In the pauses of his cough, he noticed that the sweet young voice which had fallen so pleasantly on his ears, was silent. He had been coughing for several minutes, when a beautiful little girl, not more than two years old, came timidly upon the porch, holding a small box in her hand, which, with that artless, yet shrinking grace so lovely in children, she held out for his reception. The instant he took the box, she turned and flew back with the swiftness of a bird, vanishing through the door by which she had come upon the porch.

Glancing down at the small, round paper box left in his hand, Mr. Jansen saw, by the label, that it contained cough lozenges. Surprise mingled with a feeling of pleasure at this delicately offered relief. He placed one of the lozenges in his mouth, and in a little while the irritating mucus was dissolved, and the cough abated. When Mr. Jansen went into the parlor soon afterwards, the child and her attendant—mother or nurse—were gone. A gentleman with whom he had some acquaintance was there, with three or four other guests. Taking a seat beside this person, Mr. Jansen said—

“Did you notice a beautiful child here a few minutes ago?”

“Yes,” was answered.

“Who was with her?”

“No one but her nurse.”

“Are you certain?”

“Yes.”

Mr. Jansen felt disappointed, he hardly knew why. It was on his lips to ask if the incident of sending out the box of lozenges had been observed; but, on second thought, he remained silent on that head.

“Whose child was it?” he inquired, after a pause.

“I do not know.”

No farther questions were asked by Mr. Jansen. An hour afterwards, as he sat in one of the piazzas, gazing out upon the sea, a sudden burst of musical child-laughter near at hand, caused him to look round quickly. Only a few paces from him was the sweet little fairy, whose image had not yet faded from his mind. She was struggling, merrily, with her nurse, a slender girl, or woman, from whom she had escaped. The face of the nurse being turned

from Mr. Jansen, he could not see her features. She caught up the child in her arms, and ran back through the door from which it had come, disappearing from sight. The scene passed in a moment. Soon after, a lady of refined and graceful appearance came out, leading the child, who walked quietly at her side. They moved down the piazza, through its whole length of two hundred feet, and then back again, passing Mr. Jansen, but not seeming to observe him. The lady then withdrew into the house.

On the evening of the same day, near sundown, Mrs. Jansen took a walk accompanied by her husband. She was tricked out in an abundance of finery, that acted as a foil to her coarse face and vulgar figure. As she moved amid the promenaders, she talked loudly, attracting a kind of notice that was mortifying to her husband. Many turned and looked after her, smiling at her vanity, or sneering at her vulgarity. If Mr. Jansen did not see this, he knew, from perception and his knowledge of human nature, that it was so.

“The air feels chilly this evening. Let us go back,” said Mr. Jansen, after walking for half an hour. He paused as he spoke. Mrs. Jansen replied, speaking in the elevated tone of voice common to people of small refinement—

“Indeed and I’m not going back! You’re as ’fraid of pure air as if it were poison. Come along, Mr. Jansen!”

She spoke the last sentence quite imperatively.

The child, from whose hand Mr. Jansen had received the lozenges, ran, at this instant, frolicking against him. He stooped and caught her in his arms to prevent her from falling. Then he stood face to face with her nurse; a pale, slender woman, of not less than thirty-five. She had clear, brown eyes; exquisitely cut features; and a mouth full of tender sadness. Reaching out her arms for the child, she gazed steadily, but only for an instant, into the face of Mr. Jansen; then vanished in the crowd. It was Madeline! The recognition had been mutual.

CHAPTER XXV.

This scene passed, later in the evening.

“Can I speak a few words with you?” The lady to whom this was addressed glanced up at the speaker, who was standing, and then at her husband, who was reading at a centre-table.

"Yes," she answered, in a kind voice, yet with a certain dignified sense of superiority, that was quite apparent in her manner; and then waited for the communication about to be made.

"Can I see you alone?"

"Oh, certainly!" said the lady, evincing slight annoyance, yet rising promptly.

"What is it, Madeline?" she asked, as soon as they were in the adjoining bed-chamber—lady and nurse; the one sitting and the other standing.

"You will think strangely of me ma'am, but—" The nurse stopped in the middle of her sentence, and caught her breath with a half sob, like one under the influence of strong feeling.

"Strangely, Madeline! On what account? Speak out plainly." The lady's brow grew a little severe.

"I must leave you in the morning," said the nurse, quietly, in a very low voice.

"Leave me! I don't understand you, Madeline. Leave me for what?"

"I came here very reluctantly, ma'am. If it hadn't been for Netty—" The voice choked again.

"You don't mean that you are going from Newport to-morrow morning?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Leaving me, away from home, without a nurse! Impossible, Madeline! I shall consent to no such thing."

The nurse dropped her eyes from the lady's half angry face, and stood, looking quite pale and agitated, for some moments. Then she replied, with a steadiness of voice that left her auditor in no doubt touching her resolution to do as she had intimated.

"I cannot explain, ma'am; but I must go. No inducement in your power to offer would keep me here another day. I shall leave in the early boat. If I did not know," she added, "that you would object to any such arrangement, I would propose taking Netty with me. I could go home with her, and remain there until you returned."

The lady shook her head and said, "No," emphatically.

"But what is the meaning of this? I cannot understand it, Madeline. Sit down," she added, in a gentler voice, seeing how white the face of her nurse was growing.

Madeline sat down, leaning heavily against the chair, like one oppressed with faintness.

"What is your reason for going?"

Madeline did not reply.

"Will you not confide in me? I am your friend."

"It would avail nothing, ma'am," answered Madeline.

"It might avail much. Who and what are you? There is a mystery about your life. I have seen this from the beginning. Give me your confidence. It will be better for you, Madeline; I know it will be better. There has been some sad error. Tell me the story frankly, so that I may know how to be your true friend."

"There are few lives without error," replied Madeline, sadly. "Mine has not escaped. But, as in too many instances, the error is past correction, and I must still eat the bitter fruit. I feel your kindness, but the confidence you ask cannot be given."

A long silence followed. The lady was surprised and perplexed. Madeline, who had been in her family as a nurse for over a year, going quietly and faithfully through her duties, taking her place with the servants in the family as a servant, came all at once into a different aspect. The mistress felt a new impression of her character—felt, from her language, manner and bearing, the presence of an equal mind with equal culture.

"Let it be as you will, Madeline," she said, breaking the oppressive silence. "There must be painful, and I will believe, imperative reasons, for the course you are taking. It will leave me embarrassed here. I cannot hope to supply your place; and shall be obliged, failing in the effort, to return home."

Tears fell over Madeline's face as she answered—

"The reason, dear madam, is indeed painful and imperative. If it were not so, I could not leave you. Oh, if you will but consent to my taking Netty home! That would relieve you from all embarrassment, and you could remain here through the season. I will be very careful of her."

"No—no, Madeline. I cannot think of that, and I know that Mr. B—— will object, positively. I'm afraid, too, that, when he hears of your sudden purpose to go, he will be very angry."

Madeline sighed heavily.

"Can't you put off your departure for a day or two. The time is so short."

Madeline shivered, as she replied—

"I cannot remain a day longer. If you knew—" She stopped, showing much agitation.

"Knew what, Madeline? My dear woman, why not trust me?"

For a few moments there was struggle and hesitation with Madeline. Out of it she came resolved and firm. Her answer closed the interview. Rising, she said, with a quiet dignity of manner that left Mrs. B—— no further plea for remonstrance—

"I shall never forget your kindness, and never cease to regret the necessity that compels me to leave you now. In every life, madam, there are things too sacred to be uncovered, even for the eyes of those nearest and dearest. There are burdens which we must bear alone, even though they become so heavy upon our weak shoulders that we fall fainting by the way. Mine is such a burden; and I shall only lay it down, when my feet stand at an open grave."

Turning away, she left the room, going out quickly. The lady made no effort to detain her. Madeline's room was on the next floor above. As she came along the passage, near the main stairway, she encountered Mrs. Jansen, accompanied by her two daughters, gayly dressed in ball attire. There was to be dancing in the great parlor on that evening, and the music was already echoing through the house. Madeline shrunk aside, turning her face to the wall. She feared to meet the husband and father. But, he had no heart for music and dancing, as she found soon after. She stood still for a little while, and then passed up stairs. In her confusion, she turned to the right hand instead of the left, and did not perceive her mistake until she commenced examining the numbers, in order to determine her own room. This increased her bewilderment. As she stood, trying to get her mind clear, a deep, jarring cough sounded from one of the rooms. She knew from whom it came but too well! For some moments her feet seemed bound to the floor. The cough rattled on, painfully intense; ceasing with a heavy moan. In the pause she was about moving back along the passage, when there came from the room an exclamation of alarm, and the door was thrown open. Mr. Jansen stepped out a pace or so. His eyes were starting with a look of fear. He held to his mouth a white handkerchief, that was stained with blood.

"Oh! Oh! Call somebody!" he cried out, in a half smothered voice. Then coughed, raising large mouthfuls of blood.

Madeline did not hesitate for an instant. It was no time to consider questions of propriety. The case before her stood as for life or death.

"Go in and lie down quickly!" she said, as she sprang across the passage, and almost

forced him back into the room. "Lie down quickly!" she repeated.

Jansen obeyed, passively. Madeline jerked the bell, and then asked—

"Is there salt in the room?"

Mr. Jansen shook his head.

The blood still came up in large mouthfuls. Madeline held a basin, and wiped off the red stains from his lips at each expectoration. She was preternaturally calm—calm from the pressure of intense excitement—and pale as marble.

"Bring some salt, a tumbler, and water! Quickly! And call a doctor!" said Madeline, to a servant who answered the bell. The servant, comprehending what he saw, ran down stairs, and soon reappeared with the desired articles.

"Did you find a doctor?" asked Madeline, as she mixed the salt and water.

"Yes. He will be here in a moment."

Madeline raised the head of Mr. Jansen, and held the saline draught to his lips. The servant went out, and she was again alone with him. The blood still came up freely, but the intervals were longer. She was wiping the blood and mucus away from his lips when the doctor came in, accompanied by the servant who had just left the chamber. Madeline moved back from the bed, giving place to the doctor. Her face was pale as death. She staggered a little, and caught herself against the wall; then went groping towards the door, like one who saw but imperfectly.

"Your nurse has fainted, ma'am," said one of the waiters, coming into Mrs. B——'s room, hastily. "She's fainted, and is lying on the floor."

"Where is she?" asked Mrs. B——, as she started up.

"She's lying in the passage, up stairs, ma'am."

When Mrs. B—— reached the upper passage, she found that Madeline had been carried to her own chamber. She was lying on the bed, white and insensible.

"What does this mean? What happened to her?" she asked; but no one could answer her question.

It was nearly an hour before signs of life appeared. During this time, Mrs. B—— heard something about Mr. Jansen's hemorrhage, and the assistance which Madeline had rendered. The doctor had found her in the sick man's room, looking ghastly and frightened, yet doing all that was best to be done in the alarming emergency.

"This woman puzzles me," said Mrs.

B——, as she sat with her husband, after Madeline had come to herself, and was considered well enough to be left alone for the night. "What was she doing at the other end of the house, where Mr. and Mrs. Jansen's rooms are situated? Her chamber is at the extreme east, and their apartments at the extreme west."

"Jansen?—Jansen?" Mr. B—— uttered the name in a tone of curious inquiry. "Oh, he's the man that had such a time with his first wife. Don't you remember? He married a gay, spirited, beautiful girl—her name was Spencer, I believe—"

"Why, that is Madeline's name!" exclaimed Mrs. B——.

"Madeline Spencer! The very name! I remember it perfectly!"

Husband and wife looked at each other in silent surprise.

"Can it be possible that Madeline is the former wife of Mr. Jansen?" said Mrs. B——.

"I shouldn't wonder. She's always seemed to me above her position."

"No one could have been more faithful," replied Mrs. B——.

"I did not mean that she assumed airs above her position; but, that she was fitted for a superior place."

"In my interview with her this evening," said Mrs. B——, "she put off the relation of a domestic, and talked with me as one of equal condition. Heretofore, few words have passed between us. She has not been communicative nor chatty, like girls who usually fill the place she held with us. To-night, her language was that of an educated woman, who had thought, and felt, and suffered; of a woman of character and purpose—strong to bear, and resolute to do, what her convictions showed to be right."

"Depend upon it," said Mr. B——, "she is Jansen's first wife."

"And if so, how infinitely superior to the coarse, vulgar woman who now claims him for her husband. Why, she disgusts every one! She's the laughing stock of the house. And such forward, hoydenish girls! They've been here only two days, and yet everybody is remarking on their rudeness and want of good manners. I noticed Madeline looking at them yesterday, as they ran screaming up and down the piazza. And I now remember, that she caught up Netty suddenly, and ran with her into the house, as if to escape from their annoyance. I do not wonder that she decided to leave here immediately."

"She will not be well enough to go in the morning," said Mr. B——. "The shock of this evening's encounter with Mr. Jansen will probably make her ill."

"Her case assumes a new aspect," remarked the lady. "Did you ever hear anything ill against her?—anything touching her character, I mean?"

"Well, there was some hard talk—there always will be in such cases. People are very prone to imagine evil. But, I fancy, she kept her garments free from stain. The separation was her own act. They had a quarrel, it was said, about something. He was overbearing and tyrannical; and she strong-willed and independent. In a fit of passion, she went away, declaring her purpose never to return unless he promised a different line of conduct. He would not promise, and she would not humble herself. So they stood apart, year after year; and, finally, on the plea of desertion, her husband obtained a divorce. So the case stands, I think. This is the head and front of the offending—nothing more."

"Taking it for granted," said Mrs. B——, "that Madeline is the person we suppose, can we blame her for going away?"

"Not fairly. I do not see how she can remain a day longer."

"Is she not entitled to consideration on our part?" asked Mrs. B——.

"I think so."

"She has been in our family for over a year, and has been faithful to Netty. I do not like to see her going away from here alone; going out into the world friendless and homeless, it may be. Her case touches me."

"What have you to suggest?"

"That we leave here to-morrow afternoon."

"And go home?"

"Yes. I cannot remain without a nurse; and the chances are all against my obtaining one. Beyond this, I am impressed with the conviction that we cannot disregard Madeline and be blameless. In the order of that Providence which gives no respect to persons, she is now in our hands. Her situation, if what we suppose in regard to her be true, is one of peculiar interest. Let us take her home. It may involve a little self-denial. But, good is born of self-denial."

"The matter is in your hands," said Mr. B——. "I shall make no objection, decide as you will."

"Then I decide to go home to-morrow."

"So let it be."

In the morning, Madeline did not come as usual, for Netty.

"I'm afraid she's sick. The agitation of last evening has been too much for her," said Mrs. B——, on rising to attend to her early awaking child.

"It may be well to see how she is," suggested the husband.

It was nearly seven o'clock. After dressing Netty, Mrs. B—— went up to Madeline's room. She found the door open, but no one in the apartment. Glancing around hurriedly, she saw that Madeline's trunk had been taken away; and on examining the closet and case of drawers, discovered that everything had been removed from them. Inquiry at the office, settled all doubts. The nurse had left Newport by the early morning line.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Out in the World.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

CHAPTER XVII.

Once more fairly in her power, Mrs. Windall used all the subtle art she possessed, in order to hold Mrs. Jansen passive to her will. She had, within a day or two, changed her home, and was now residing in Jersey City, occupying a pleasant room in a suburban residence that overlooked the bay. Not in a boarding house, but as the guest at will of a lady in good circumstances, a recent acquaintance, between whom and herself a sudden and close intimacy had been formed. This lady's name was Barling. She was a widow, with only one child, a boy six years old.

Mrs. Barling was a woman of some cultivation and taste, and enjoyed intercourse with intellectual people, though not very intellectual herself. In the sphere of other and stronger minds, her thought was quickened to higher activity, and so dwelt in regions which she could not have attained alone. There was sufficient pleasure in this to lead her much into the society of men and women of superior minds. Mrs. Windall, slightly repelling her at the first meeting, had, subsequently, attracted her strongly. She noted peculiarities—some of them in opposition to her good taste—but set them down as eccentricities of genius. These she soon ceased to observe. Flowing in with the even current of Mrs. Barling's life, Mrs. Windall had pleased her with flatteries skilfully applied, and so won upon her affection and confidence. An invitation to spend a few weeks at her house was given with such an earnest cordiality, that a person of far less independence of feelings than Mrs. Windall, would scarcely have hesitated on the question of acceptance.

By the time Mrs. Jansen reached the residence of Mrs. Barling, she was so exhausted that she could scarcely bear up the weight of her body. Assisted by Mrs. Windall and a servant, she was just able to ascend to one of the chambers, where she sunk, half fainting, on a bed. A little wine gave artificial stimulus to the weak and palpitating nerves. In the repose that followed she slept.

During this interval of sleep, Mrs. Windall had opportunity to explain fully to her friend the circumstances under which she had found Mrs. Jansen, and to awaken a strong interest in her favor. A cordial welcome to her house, and an invitation to remain as long as she felt inclined to do so, were given by Mrs. Barling, and thankfully accepted.

"Do not apprehend," said Mrs. Jansen, her eyes full of grateful tears, "that I will become a burdensome intruder. Give me a brief time to recover my strength, and to determine my steps for the future, and I will pass on. The way before me is shrouded in darkness. I cannot see in what direction it runs, but I know that it is a difficult and dangerous way. I need a little pause, and in a place where I can stand firm, that I may gird myself for the struggles that await me."

The effort and excitement which had attended Madeline's escape from the house of Mrs. Cairne, left her very weak, and with symptoms of fever. Two or three days passed before she was able to leave her room. During the time she was scarcely ever alone, Mrs. Windall was her constant companion. The strong repugnance she had felt towards this woman gradually subsided, and while she felt no attraction towards her, she almost unconsciously yielded up her will, and suffered her thoughts and future plans to take the direction that she pointed out.

Mrs. Windall was a thoroughly selfish and unscrupulous woman. Every thought was limited by considerations of a personal nature, and ministered to sinister ends. Under the guise of philanthropic profession, she concealed an unwavering devotion to selfish ends. Her first thought, on meeting Mrs. Jansen at the house of Mrs. Woodbine, after the separation, was—"How can I turn this circumstance to account?" And, almost instantly, a suggestion of the means came. It was for this reason that she was so prompt to invite Mrs. Jansen to go home with her, and that she was so basely unscrupulous about the ways in which she sought to obtain control over the tried and unhappy woman.

Too indolent or proud, for ordinary useful work, whereby to secure an income, Mrs. Windall lacked the genius for higher efforts. A few times she had tried public readings, but miserably failed, the receipts for tickets not covering half of the expenses. Once pressed for the means of living, after exhausting the patience of temporary friends, who gradually receded the more intimately they knew her, she tried, under an assumed address, the game of a public swindler. In this she was more successful in a pecuniary way; but ran such a narrow risk of arrest and exposure, that she had never since felt easy in mind.

The swindling operation we have mentioned was in this wise. Mrs. Windall, under a false name, and with forged letters of credence and

introduction, purporting to be from well known persons in the Southern States, visited Buffalo, where she advertised for twenty-five teachers, young women, to go South, promising immediate engagements in seminaries and families, with liberal compensation. Applications, many, came in to her, and she found little difficulty in making arrangements with twenty-five young ladies to accompany her to Charleston. A time was appointed for the journey to begin, and on the day previous, each of the girls placed in the hands of Mrs. Windall the sum of thirty dollars, for the payment of expenses. She was to procure tickets for the company, and to meet them at the railroad depot in the morning. But, on their assembling at the depot, at the appointed time, Mrs. Windall was not there. She had departed in a midnight train, with over seven hundred dollars in her pocket, and was never again seen or heard of in Buffalo.

The swindle was published, and some efforts made to find and punish the swindler. But, as the cheated girls were poor, and without influential friends, there was but little to stimulate police efforts, and Mrs. Windall, though seriously alarmed for her safety, managed to run clear. She did not think it prudent to try other schemes of a like nature. The risk was too plainly before her eyes.

The manner in which she proposed to use Mrs. Jansen to her own advantage was this. The suggestion had come to her at the house of Mrs. Jansen, and the more she dwelt upon it, the more assured of success did she feel. Mrs. Jansen was young, and attractive in person. Dressed for effect in the flash and glare of evening lights, she would appear brilliant. She had talent of a certain order. In some of the companies which met at Mrs. Woodbine's there had been readings, and Madeline, on these occasions, had several times taken part, and acquitted herself to the admiration of all. Enthusiastic, and apt to enter with her whole soul into whatever she might be doing, she had, in some of her efforts, reached a singular perfection, holding her little audiences almost spell-bound. All this Mrs. Windall remembered; and when she saw this beautiful young creature breaking away from her home, instead of pain and pity for the grief and trouble that were before her, came a thrill of pleasure in the thought, that she might turn her talents to account for her own benefit. It was this dimly shadowed purpose that led her so promptly to encourage Madeline, in opposition to Mrs. Woodbine; and that induced her to take her home, as we have seen.

The plan of using Mrs. Jansen's personal attractions and talents as here indicated, once conceived by Mrs. Windall, was not to be relinquished. She saw an easy way of improving her rather desperate circumstances opening before her, and it was worth an effort to remove the obstructions that kept her feet back from entrance.

The first thing done by Mrs. Windall towards accomplishing her end, now that she had her victim in her power, and full time to plot and plan at leisure, was to win over Mrs. Barling to her views. Mrs. Barling was a weak, as well as a confiding woman; and where she trusted another of stronger mind than herself, could easily be led to see with that other one's eyes. The first intimation of what was in the mind of Mrs. Windall, rather shocked her feelings than elicited approval. But, Mrs. Windall not only understood human nature in general, but the particular human nature of her friend, and with the skill of an accomplished tactician, soon managed to lead her into the position she considered it most desirable for her to occupy.

To Mrs. Jansen, the subject was at first introduced in remote hints; but she did not understand them. Nothing could have been farther from her thoughts. When, at last, the suggestion came to her mind in a definite form, she shrunk back from the idea with a shiver of reluctance. In pondering the future, and scanning the ways and means by which she was to live, this had not once occurred to her. Most emphatically did she answer, "No, no! I will never think of that."

But Mrs. Windall was not the woman to relinquish any well digested scheme in which she was to derive benefit. First bringing Mrs. Barling entirely over to her views of the case, which was easily done, she commenced her insidious work upon Mrs. Jansen. With a most painful vividness did she bring before her mind the difficulties that would beset her way. She must live self-sustained, but how?

"Now is the time to look this question clearly in the face," she said, "and to determine your course for the future. How will you live? If I were less your friend than I am, I would not pain you by thrusting the subject into view; but, as your friend, deeply interested in your well being, I cannot shrink from the way of duty. How are you to live? In breaking away from the tyranny of your husband, you left empty-handed, and you are too proud and independent to ask of him anything. You have no income in your own right.

So the question of living is resolved into self-dependence. You must earn your bread. Here is the naked truth; and the question repeats itself—How? There are only two ways; by skill of hands or skill of head. Which will you choose? For women, as you are too well advised, the avenues to remunerative positions are few. You cannot get a clerkship in a bank or counting-house, nor secure the secretaryship of an insurance company. The doors of all public offices are closed against us. You might find a place in some fancy dry goods' or mantilla store. Perhaps Brodie would accept your services at four or five dollars a week as a lay figure on which to exhibit cloaks. But, I don't know. Then there is teaching. What are your gifts and qualifications, looking to this line of employment?"

Mrs. Jansen shook her head gloomily.

"You are not fit for a teacher. That is clear," said Mrs. Windall, emphatically. "What then? There is needlework; or, in other words, suicide. But, one possessing your gifts and education, would hardly go down to enter into competition with poor, half-starved, needle women. No—no. You were made for something higher and better—for a broader and nobler sphere—for the exercise of talents such as only the few possess. You have dramatic powers of no ordinary kind."

"You are mistaken," replied Mrs. Jansen, warmly, yet with a troubled tone and manner. "And even if I did possess dramatic talents, one thing is certain, I will never go on the stage. Teaching, the needle, store-attendance—anything but that!"

"I did not suggest the stage," said Mrs. Windall. "You misunderstood me. I only referred to your dramatic power as an important element in public reading. That is the guarantee of your high success; a success that will make you independent in the world. A little earnest training of your voice—and a few lessons from a good elocutionist—and you are as certain as the day to succeed. I know your delicacy of feeling—your sensitiveness about coming before the public; but there is a way of self-protection entirely justifiable. You may come out as a public reader, and yet avoid all unpleasant notoriety."

"How?"

"By doing as others have done. Assume a name for public use. No one is hurt thereby. No wrong is intended. The act will be, as I have intimated, simply one of self-protection. A writer has the option of concealing his per-

sonality under a *nom de plume*; and may not a speaker do the same? It is clear enough to my mind; and a little reflection will make it clear enough to yours."

But, against both a public appearance and an assumed name, the feelings of Madeline strongly revolted; and it required all the subtlety and management of the woman in whose power she had fallen, to overcome the delicacy and high sense of honor that were shocked by the proposal. Of all the means used to reduce Madeline to her will, we will not speak. The reader has already seen the dangerous power that Mrs. Windall had gained over her; a power not likely to be relinquished, when its use would serve the purpose she had in view. It was on her side, and against her victim, that with every submission of will to the exercise of that demoniac influence which had laid passive the volition of Madeline, susceptibility increased. Of causes, and the philosophy explanatory of these causes, it is not for us here to speak. We have to do only with a fact that is full of significance and warning.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mrs. Barling was a kind, generous, hospitable woman; and it went hard with her, after Mrs. Jansen had been in her house for a month, to let an intimation drop, on the presence of a fitting occasion, to the effect, that it was time she was beginning to try her strength in the world. Of herself, she could not have done this. It was Mrs. Windall who spoke through her.

That hint was sufficient, and Mrs. Jansen, stung to the quick, made almost immediate preparation to leave. It was in vain that Mrs. Barling remonstrated, and in all sincerity urged her to remain longer. The native pride and independence of Mrs. Jansen was hurt, and nothing could reconcile her to stay. The question of going clearly settled, that of when and whither was fairly opened, and grave discussions followed, that only showed Madeline how dark and difficult was the path lying before her, and left her mind deeper in labyrinthine doubts. Half maddened by the pain of her situation, the unhappy woman at last gave up, and dropped, passively, into the hands of Mrs. Windall. A few months of training for the new work upon which she had so reluctantly consented to begin, was considered necessary both by Mrs. Windall and Mrs. Barling, and after strong persuasion and repeated apologies and explanations from the latter, Mrs. Jansen consented

to remain her guest during this time of preparation.

In Philadelphia the first trial was made by Mrs. Jansen, just six months after the fatal day of separation from her husband. The newspapers, jointly with posters displayed all over the city, announced that a Mrs. Aberdeen would give dramatic readings at the Musical Fund Hall on a certain evening. The programme embraced a few well known passages from Shakspeare; the "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," by Mrs. Browning; "Horatius," from Macaulay's Lays of Ancient Rome; "The Raven," and "The Bells," of Poe; with humorous pieces interspersed.

Mrs. Windall had many old acquaintances in Philadelphia, and she did not hesitate about calling on them, notwithstanding her collapse in that city some years before. She trusted to a weakness of memory, the softening influence of time, and her own assurance, for a reëstablishment of former friendly relations. Some, who did not easily forget, and others who could not renew a confidence once betrayed, kept her at a distance; but she found enough ready to forget and forgive the past, and through them was able to create a warm interest in her young and attractive friend, and secure for her a fair audience.

As the hour for Madeline's first appearance in public drew near, a nervous anxiety about the result took possession of her. An active imagination kept the scene in which she was about to participate too vividly before her mind. She saw herself standing alone before a large concourse of people, and felt herself dumb in their presence. How could she lift her voice in calm assurance? How could she lose self-consciousness, and dwell in the ideas and characters she was to represent? It seemed to her impossible. Mrs. Windall, who saw, with deep concern, the state into which she was falling, used all the means of reëssurance that were suggested to her thoughts, but without apparent success. The paleness of Madeline's face, its anxiety, and the expression of dread or fear that was settling over it, alarmed her for the result of the evening's experiments.

"This will never do," she said, half kindly, half chidingly, as the evening approached. "Confidence creates success, even where ability is small. In your case, where there is so much talent, all that is needed for triumph is self-assurance. Throw all this timidity to the winds. You are standing at the threshold of a brilliant career; do not, by any

unwomanly weakness, put the result in jeopardy."

"I have no faith in myself," Madeline replied, gloomily.

"While I have all faith. Forget yourself; and be, for the time, the character you assume."

"I cannot forget myself." Some irritation appeared in Mrs. Jansen's manner. "What I am—where I am—and what I am about doing, hold my thoughts in bondage. I see myself shrinking, trembling, dumb in the presence of a multitude. Oh, that I could fly away to some desert, and escape this fiery trial!"

Mrs. Windall was alarmed. She had given Madeline credit for more strength of nerve; had built confidently on success. What was to be done? Madeline's nerves were excited—she must tranquillize them if possible. She took one of her hands. Its coldness struck her with surprise.

"I'm afraid you are not well," she said.

"My head is aching badly," Madeline answered.

"How long has this been?"

"It has been aching all day. Slightly during the forenoon—intensely for the last two hours."

"Why didn't you tell me of this?" said Mrs. Windall, a little sharply. They had been sitting close together, facing each other. Mrs. Windall arose, and standing near Madeline, drew her head against her side. There was a feeble effort on the part of Madeline to remove herself from this contact, but Mrs. Windall smoothed her hair softly with one hand, while she used some force with the other to retain the head where she had placed it. In a few moments, Mrs. Jansen was entirely passive.

"Is your head easier?" asked Mrs. Windall.

"Yes."

"You should have mentioned this before. There is magic in my touch. I have the gift of healing."

Mrs. Jansen made no reply, but sat with her head leaning heavily against Mrs. Windall, like one who had abandoned herself to the enjoyment of that easeful rest which follows pain.

A dull kind of stupor followed, from which it required some effort on the part of Mrs. Windall to arouse her. Slowly the mind of Mrs. Jansen came back to a realization of the actual. The audience, in presence of which she had, in imagination, stood weak and shivering, had faded from her eyes. She had forgotten everything external in the dreamy quiet which this syren had thrown around her

spirit. Now, as thought was released from bonds, and imagination went wandering again in the mazes from which it had been withdrawn, the old quiver shook her nerves—the old throb beat in her temples—the old fear took possession of her heart.

"I shall fail!" she said, with visible agitation. "Miserably fail! What folly! Oh, that there were time to recall the announcement."

"If there was one quality above all others for which I gave you credit," replied Mrs. Windall, "it was courage. I never imagined, for an instant, that the woman who could face the issues you have faced alone, standing up so bravely in your own strength, could be coward in so small a thing as this. Think of what is to follow success or failure! If you succeed, you are independent of the world. If you fail, what then? Forget whatever may seem unpleasant in the means, for the sake of the end. Look to the end—to the end, my dear Mrs. Jansen! Away to the goal, and not down to your feet, dreading lest you stumble and fall. The confident command success; the timid and hesitating are sure to fail. Summon the native strength of your character. Let pride come to your aid. Spurn, as unworthy, all that is man-pleasing or man-fearing. Stand up—strong, heroic, daring. Confidence is inspiration."

Madeline turned her face away. There was no power in all these sentences to help her. She felt herself growing weaker and weaker. She was frightened at the prospect before her.

The afternoon had worn away until five o'clock. At eight, Mrs. Jansen was announced to appear at the Musical Fund Hall. Only three hours intervened.

"If you could fall asleep," said Mrs. Windall, who had become alarmed for the result. "Sleep calms the mind, and restores its lost equipoise. Lie down. I will close the blinds. Perhaps you may lose yourself. Even a few minutes of forgetfulness will do much good."

"Sleep!" returned Madeline, almost passionately, "you might as well ask the martyr on his bed of coals to sleep!"

"All this is unworthy of you," said Mrs. Windall, in a rebuking voice. "You are a woman, equipped for life's battle; not a half-grown child. Will you cower and skulk in face of an enemy? Run at the first encounter? For shame!"

The spur went pricking into the sensitive flank, and the dull blood leaped along in fuller currents. The heart of Madeline was a little

stronger. She struggled with weakness, and grew brave.

"All this is unwomanly," she said. "I must rise above it."

"Spoken like your own self," answered Mrs. Windall. "Yes, you must rise above all these petty weaknesses. Strength comes of will. Look onward to achievement; not aside at difficulties. If there be lions in the way, the brave heart shall find them chained."

Evening came. At eight o'clock Madeline passed up from one of the small ante-rooms on the first floor, to the platform, and stood facing the audience, a vision of beauty that sent admiring murmurs throughout the hall. She was not dressed according to her own taste and sense of propriety; nor yet in a manner to satisfy Mrs. Windall. There had been a compromise on this head between manager and debutante. The former contended for low neck, short sleeves, and pink satin; the latter for plain black and a modest arrangement of her dress. A dove-colored silk, rather profusely trimmed, with some hair ornaments, and a gay sash, exhibited this compromise. As there was not much in Madeline's attire to draw attention from her face, which was almost colorless as she advanced in front of the audience, all eyes scanned it with curious interest.

This was the critical moment. Mrs. Windall, who had accompanied her on the stage, held her breath in painful suspense. Madeline, as she stood thus confronting a sea of upturned, curious, expectant faces, felt the old sense of weakness and terror stealing over her. But, rallying herself with a desperate effort of will, she threw out her voice in the opening piece of the entertainment. It was low and unsteady at first, causing a hush throughout the assembly; but soon gained firmness and volume. There were some faults in the elocution; but so much in the whole rendering of the scene she had chosen which took the audience by surprise, that she was greeted with an electric outburst of applause as she turned from the reading desk, and disappeared from the platform. Her second and third pieces were more enthusiastically cheered than the first. In a humorous effort that followed, she was not successful. Her mind was not strung to anything like this. "The Raven" that came afterwards was a surprise, and had to be repeated. Grandly she gave "Horatius," stirring all hearts with a battle scene. Tenderly, and with almost unequalled pathos, she read the "Lady Geraldine's Courtship." Mrs.

Browning herself, had she been present, must have felt some passages quite as deeply as when they thrilled her soul in the first fervors of poetic inspiration.

It was a triumph. Rarely has it occurred that such complete success attended a first appearance in public. One thing was noticeable. The paleness did not leave the face of Madeline. Her beautiful eyes flashed and changed, and her countenance was mobile to every passion and sentiment; but the whiteness remained. A few friends, made during her brief sojourn in Philadelphia, came into the ante-room below after the performance, to offer their congratulations. They found her in an exhausted condition, like one whose strength had been greatly overtaken. She manifested no pleasure when they spoke enthusiastically of her success; and seemed only desirous to get away.

On reaching her room at the hotel, Madeline, who had remained wholly irresponsive to Mrs. Windall, (that person was in a kind of ecstasy over the evening's triumph) asked to be left alone.

"You will have something," said Mrs. Windall, lingering.

"Nothing," replied Madeline coldly.

"You are exhausted by so unusual an effort. Let me send for a glass of wine." Mrs. Windall made a movement as if about to pull the bell.

"No—no!" said Madeline, in a quick, impatient voice. "I said that I wished to be alone," she added, with an assertion of will that took Mrs. Windall by surprise.

The latter withdrew; as she shut the door after her, Madeline turned the key, that she might be safe from further intrusion. Then disrobing herself, she got into bed, and shrinking down among the clothes and pillows, lay as still as if sleep had fallen upon her instantly. But sleep was very far from her eyelids. Every faculty of mind was awake and in action. She had succeeded in her first public reading, far beyond even Mrs. Windall's anticipations. As for herself, she had counted on failure. A nervous fear had, almost up to the last moment, oppressed her. How she overcame the weakness was not clear. She had lost the chain of mental action. A link was missing that she could not find. Blindly she had stepped over a chasm into which she had expected to fall—blindly, and so the way across that chasm was lost, and she could not approach it again in any hope of a safe passage.

As the case stood with Mrs. Jansen, there was no assurance in the future from this night's success. The triumph was only an accident; not a sequence. It was the question of advancing or receding which now fully occupied her thoughts; a question that she meant to determine before the next day dawn. How she determined will appear in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

Three days after Madeline's debut at the Musical Fund Hall, Mrs. Barling received the following letter from Mrs. Windall.

"MY DEAR MRS. BARLING:—I promised to write you fully about Mrs. Jansen's first appearance. After a magnificent debut everything has failed. I write in chagrin and disappointment beyond what I can express. It has turned out as I feared. She has talent, genius, power; but, no faith in herself—nothing of that tenacity of character so essential to high achievement. But, let me come down to the plain facts, and tell the story as it occurred. On arriving in Philadelphia, we took rooms at the United States Hotel on Chestnut street, and I immediately renewed my acquaintance with several dear old friends, of high social position and much influence. The warmest kind of interest was taken in Mrs. Jansen, or rather in Mrs. Aberdeen, the name by which she was introduced. I am sorry to say, that she did not respond with anything of her natural grace, vivacity, and sweetness of temper to the generous interest that every one manifested. She was distant and cold towards all who approached her. The change that became apparent from the time of our arrival in Philadelphia was remarkable. From the beginning of my acquaintance with Mrs. Jansen, I possessed great influence over her; but that influence was strangely broken on our coming here. It seemed as though a new spirit had taken possession of her, which I had no power to exorcise.

"To be brief, Mrs. Jansen lost all faith in herself. She had no confidence in the approaching trial, and persistently talked of failure. Up to the last moment, she held back, and could she have met a single person injudicious enough to utter a doubting word, would have refused to confront the waiting audience. All this I saw, and you may be sure I was in an agony of suspense and fear.

"I took her hand as we ascended from the waiting-room below. It was like ice, and had

a low, quick shiver, that sent a chill along my nerves. 'Courage!' I whispered—'you stand on the threshold of a grand success!' She made no response. I walked out with her upon the stage, holding my breath. The decisive moment had come; I saw her shrink in the presence of an eagerly expectant assembly, and my heart stood still. Another moment, and her voice swept out low and clear, but with slight faltering. My heart went on again. I was assured. Two or three sentences, her voice steadily rising, and then she was in full command of herself. I never saw, in any of our most successful actors, a more perfect absorption of self in the impersonation of a character than was shown by Mrs. Jansen. It was simple inspiration and wonderful! When she retired, at the close of her first piece, the whole house thundered with applause. I caught her hand and wrung it enthusiastically—I filled her ears with praises and congratulations—but she was cold and dumb as a stone. The paleness had not left her face—the thrilling shiver was in her icy hand. She sat down, her lips dropping apart, and remained like a statue until the waiting audience gave signs of impatience; and even then, I had to arouse her for the new effort. As at first, she advanced in the face of the audience in a spiritless, hesitating manner; but she was all life and energy when the work, from which she held back with such a strange reluctance, began. Her second effort was better than the first.

"'Glorious!' I said, as I put my arms around her on receiving her again from the platform. But I might as well have spoken to an image. She sat down as before, in a dull, despairing kind of way, wholly irresponsive. So it continued throughout the evening. Before the audience she was inspired, electric, passionate, wonderful! Out of their presence, a weak, shivering, frightened child.

"'No matter,' I said to myself, as we rode home after her triumph, reviewing in thought the strange contrast of state I have mentioned—'she can do the work, and that is the great desideratum—how she does it is a thing of minor importance. She will get over this intense nervousness in time. The wonderful success of to-night, when she comes to review it, will give her a large measure of confidence. All is well! Her future is safe.'

"But, alas! it was not safe! Arrived at the hotel, she went immediately to her room, whither I accompanied her. I saw that she was much exhausted, and urged her to take a

glass of wine; but she refused all refreshment, and desired me to leave her at once alone. I did not think this well, seeing in what a nervous condition the performance had left her, and determined to remain for a time. But, recognizing my purpose, she turned on me with an imperious manner, such as I had never seen her put on before, and pushed me, by will and words stronger than hands, out of her room. I had a glimpse of her character in that moment not seen before. Her husband, in their late quarrel, which led to a separation, was not, I now fancy, all in the wrong. There is a slumbering volcano in her heart, and all volcanos have their periods of irruption.

"My room adjoined Mrs. Jansen's. For two whole hours, I sat close to the partition which separated her chamber from mine, listening intently. Not a sound reached my ears. In the stillness of night, the respiration of a sleeper may be heard at a considerable distance. I hearkened for the sighing breath of Mrs. Jansen, with my ear against the partition; but all was still as death. About twelve o'clock, I became so nervously anxious, that I went out into the passage, and going to her door, knocked gently. 'Who's there?' was instantly called out, in the clear tones of one who was evidently wide awake. 'Are you sick?' I asked. 'No,' was returned. That 'No,' was as full of repulsion as any word flung at me two hours before. I returned to my room and went to bed. It was a long time before I slept. During my wakeful hours I still listened towards Mrs. Jansen's apartment; but the silence there remained unbroken.

"In the morning when I awoke, the sun was shining brightly. Looking at my watch, I found that it was past seven o'clock. Hastily dressing myself, listening all the while for sounds in the next room, but hearing no movement, I went out in the passage. The door of Mrs. Jansen's room stood ajar; I pushed it open and went in. Mrs. Jansen was dressed, and sitting by the window. She turned towards me as I entered, and I saw that her face was still quite pale. Her eyes had a look of purpose in them that in no way lessened the uneasiness I felt.

"'How are you, dear?' I asked, with all the affectionate interest I could throw into my voice and manner, advancing quickly towards her, and grasping one of her hands. I stooped to kiss her, but she turned her head, and refused the salutation. Her hand gave back no pressure.

"'Very well,' she replied, coldly.

"'Have you slept soundly?'"

"'No,' she said, without change in the dead level of her voice.

"'You are refreshed. The exhaustion of last night has passed away,' I continued.

"'In a measure,' she returned, with the same indifference of manner.

"'Let me repeat my congratulations at your triumphant success last night,' I said, coming to what was nearest my heart.

"'Rather,' she replied, at my escape from failure and humiliation.' She spoke calmly—I might say, coldly, turning towards me, and looking at me in full self-possession. 'The success was not anything of mine.'

"'Whose was it, pray?' I asked, in surprise at her appearance and language.

"'I know not,' she answered, 'but this I know, that it was not Madeline Jansen who held that audience as in a spell, and extorted admiration and applause. In outward person she stood in face of the assembly, and her tongue, voice and body were instrumentalities, but not her conscious soul.'

"'What folly to talk thus,' I said, interrupting her—'you are giving yourself to a wild fancy.'

"'No.' How cool and self-poised she was! 'No, not this morning. I have left the region of wild fancies, and possess my reason. All night I have pondered this matter, and my conclusion is reached.'

"'What is your conclusion?' I inquired, in painful suspense, for both her manner and her language were troubling me.

"'Never again to appear before an audience,' she answered, and I saw and felt that her decision was final. There are occasions when the purpose so writes itself in the face that mistake is impossible. I was too much confounded to speak, and she went on. 'It is due to you, after all the trouble and expense to which you have been subjected, that I give plain reasons for what I have declared. The chief reason, I have already intimated. To proceed is to fail. Last night's success came from unknown and intangible causes. I was like one seized by a superior being, and made to act from his strength and volition. In nothing that occurred can I recall myself—can I recognize my own skill, perception, identity. I was lost—passive—possessed—anything that you will; but not myself. To venture on this ground again would be folly, and I have as the result of a night's reflection determined not to venture again. It will be useless for you to argue the point with me; I have resolved, and my resolution is final.'

"I made no attempt to move her from the purpose she had expressed; I felt that it would be useless. Our relation to each other had undergone a sudden and remarkable change. A little while before, and I was conscious of an almost complete influence over her—she was passive to my will. Now she stood like one afar off, whom I tried vainly to reach and influence. She seemed lifted out of my sphere of action—removed to a distance—set in a way wherein my feet were not to walk.

"What do you purpose doing?" I asked.

"'I have no settled purpose beyond the one expressed just now. Time will show the ways wherein I must go. There are paths for all feet.'

"I left her and went back to my own room, that I might consider the case, and arrive at some conclusion. I am not one to abandon a line of conduct because difficulties rise up in the way. If I cannot climb over a hill, I generally manage to get around it. But I did not get over nor around this obstructing mountain. When I looked again into Mrs. Jansen's room she was not there. Going down, I found her in the ladies' parlor. Approaching, I sat down near her—near her as to person; but in my soul I felt that she was at an immeasurable distance from me—that a gulf had fallen between us which it was impossible to bridge. I wished to refer again to the last night's success—to feel on that subject once more into her mind. But I could not utter a word bearing on this theme. The sentences formed in my thought were scattered like clouds in the wind ere expression could take them. Instead, an inward voice uttered for me the words—'Our ways part here!'

"And there, my friend, they parted. We held only a brief and distant communication, as if we were two strangers sojourning at the hotel. After breakfast she went out alone, and did not return for some hours. In the afternoon she went out again. I noticed, when she came back towards evening, a troubled and disappointed look in her face; but I asked her no question, for I felt that it would be useless.

"The actual result of the evening's entertainment was a loss. At least one-third of the audience came on complimentary tickets, which were freely distributed, in order to get the prestige of a good house. Much was thrown away at the beginning in order to reach a final success. There are printing bills to pay, and other expenses to meet, for which I am, unfortunately, not in funds. To-morrow

I shall leave Philadelphia, and return to your house for a brief season. I have a hundred things I wish to say. Mrs. Jansen's conduct in the matter is bad, consider it as you will. She has caused me to waste a great deal of time, and now involves me in pecuniary embarrassment among strangers. I am distressed and mortified at the result. But she doesn't seem to care a farthing. She is responsible for nothing.

"But I will be with you in a day or two; so adieu for the present.

"AGNES WINDALL."

"P. S.—Since writing last evening, Mrs. Jansen has disappeared from the hotel. She paid her bill early this morning, and left in a carriage before I was up. No one in the office or about the hotel could give me any information in regard to her. After breakfast, through the assistance of a porter in the establishment, I discovered the hackman with whom she went away; I learned from him that he had taken her to the landing at Walnut-street wharf in time for the six o'clock New York train. I have changed my mind about returning at once to Jersey City. Some friends here are very anxious that I shall remain with them for a few weeks, and I am inclined to yield to their importunities. But I trust to see you very shortly. Meantime, I will write you often.

"A. W."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Soldier's Present.

BY MRS. HARRIET E. FRANCIS.

The sun, waiting neither for sluggard nor sleepiness, rose at just fifteen minutes past six on the morning of the nineteenth of October, and shone through a rent in Mrs. Selden's bed-room curtain, and made a bright circle on the wall, directly opposite her closed eyes, that glanced back pencillings of light, like little spears, against her quivering lids, and brought them wide open with a sudden start.

"How late it must be! I can hear the kettle singing on the stove," soliloquized that lady, as she straightened out her hair, and caught up the heavy braids with her comb—"I wish husband would not be so tender of me, letting me sleep here until the fire is half burned out. But I will make it up when I once get on to the floor. See if I do not surprise him with a call to breakfast before *his* chores are half done;" and bringing the quilt up carefully over the still sleeping baby, and unrolling a heavy inside curtain, to darken the room and insure a long nap for him, she quietly closed the door, and soon was bustling about over the dishes, then at the door, calling Mr. Selden in to his meal.

It was one of those bright and treacherous mornings that wake every one up early with promise of smiles through the day, then change, first into gloomy frowning clouds, and at last into rain, that deters all workmen from outdoor labor. Before the meal was over, heavy gusts of wind swept through the open door, raised the table-cloth, and sent the morning paper flying across the room, and then pattering drops swept against the window, and Mr. Selden rose from the table, and buttoned up his coat, and declared aloud that he must go over to the lake, and close the bargain with Mr. Drayton about those sheep and cattle, and his wife at the same time inwardly changed her arrangements, and resolved, after the children were all away to school for the whole day—for it was so rainy they must carry their dinner, she would go up into the back chamber, and look over all the winter's clothing, and see what would do to mend and re-make, and what must be laid aside for carpet-rags. Mrs. Selden was an active, energetic house-keeper, and before ten o'clock the children were all at school except the baby, and he was so early tucked in a cradle for his forenoon nap, the morning work was finished, and she was ready for her task. It was one of those disagreeable household duties that could only be accomplished by cheerfulness; but, by a strong

effort of the will and the gray light that came in through the sheeted rain, made it seem still more distasteful; "but it must be done sometime," Mrs. Selden comforted herself with saying, "and then there was no danger of interruption;" and just here, as if to falsify all human calculation, came a soft, muffled step on the floor beneath, and a light knock on the opened chamber door.

"May I come right up? I do not wish to hinder you, and I knew it was one of your very busy days, yet I was so lonesome over home," was questioned and apologized as Mrs. Selden came out of the chamber and leaned over the balustrade to see who was there.

"Oh, certainly, Mrs. Harris, though you will find me all dust and dirt."

"Better that than to sit down in my still house, and hear the rain patter on the roof, and the wind sigh about the window, and think of my baby under the turf, and Herbert and Wallace in the army. Oh, dear, I cannot help but feel downhearted on such a day as this, when every bird flies for shelter, and to think Mrs. Selden, that perhaps my poor boys are hungry, and half-clad, and pining so to hear from home, and cannot even get one line. I don't see how you can be so cheerful about Clayton, and he only nineteen too."

"But think how much I have to do, and what time I have to sit down and think, and then I am so tired I sleep sound all night. I never knew before work was such a blessing, Mrs. Harris."

"And to look back and see how I have murmured sometimes, when my children were small, and littered up the house. It was confusion from morning until night, and I used to think how happy I should be when they were grown up out of the way, and I could sit down and have a little quiet."

"Just my thoughts before Clayton left, but that has taught me a lesson. Many and many a time I have come home from your house ready to cry, because you could keep everything tidy and neat, and it was of no use for me to try, with so many busy little ones."

"And I—well, I must not talk about it, Mrs. Selden, for it will make us both downhearted. Let me help you look over some of these clothes, or rip them up. Anything to assist you and help pass away the gloomy morning."

"I was just wondering when I heard your step what I could do with this coat. It is worth rebinding if it was in any shape; but no one would be seen in it as it is, and I cannot alter it. Such narrow lappels and short

skirts—just as they wore them when you were married. Cotton yarn is so high, I am sick of saving carpet-rags, and besides, I have forty pounds cut ready for the weaver, that must now be packed away in a barrel."

"Why, take it apart, and wash it, and send it to Mrs. Warner; it is just the thing."

"What can she do with it? There is not a piece in it large enough for a vest or foot-stool."

"Haven't you heard? She has made over forty pairs of slippers for our brave soldiers in the hospital, and now she is only resting for want of material for uppers. I have given her everything I could find suitable in my house. You cannot think, Mrs. Selden, how comfortable they are, lined with flannel, and soled with soft leather."

"You are mistaken there, Mrs. Harris. You know when I sprained my foot, a year ago or more. If you had not lent me those knit overshoes of your mother's I should have suffered, for it was too cold to go in stockings, and my rubbers felt like a vice over my inflamed ankle; it is strange I did not think of it myself. If you will be so kind as to rip it I will wash it to-night, and send it by the children in the morning. Will anything besides flannel do for linings? I should like to furnish both."

"Oh, certainly: this broadcloth is so thick: that soft delaine in your hand is just the thing, if you can spare it. How Mother Warner's eyes will sparkle when she opens the package: her heart is so in the good work. I would take care of the baby if you could spare the time to run over with it yourself. It is as good as a feast to see how thankful she is for pieces and patches, 'so she can do something for the poor soldiers,' as she often says, with tears in her eyes."

* * * * *

"Oh, what a weary life; I wish I was dead!" and the sick soldier lifted up his pale, emaciated hand to his face, and stealthily brushed off two unmanly drops that were oozing from his crushed eyelids, then raised his head upon his hand and gazed listlessly out of the window, as if trying to find something in the out-door world to vary the dull monotony of his life. The first early snow lay piled in little hillocks, "like so many graves," as he whispered to himself, colored to a dingy hue by the muddy streams that crept down the mountain's side, and the winds sighed and moaned through the trees sad as a funeral dirge, and gray clouds lay close above all, sending down now and then a fierce patter of

rain, that grumbled and hissed against the window like so many tongues.

"Oh, dear!" and this time the weary, tired head fell back on the little straw pillow, and the soldier's gaze passed around the room. Row after row of single beds filled the scene, stiff and straight, pressed up against the wall, most of them holding an occupant like himself, that sighed and moaned softly, and at night wished it was morning, and at morning wished it was night, the hours were so wearisome. Over across the room, in plain sight, was one couch holding a slight, frail form, bolstered up by pillows, his chin smooth as any girl's, and the round curls, soft as a baby's, lying against his white, sunken temples—a mere boy, scarcely too large, his form was so attenuated by sickness, to be still rocked and petted in his mother's arms. Then just below the pulpit, where the head nurse sat and folded little paper parcels of medicine, and dropped into vials nauseating mixtures that sickened the whole atmosphere, stood another couch, whose occupant, a few weeks earlier, had made up faces at him, and shouted and laughed in delirious fever, now empty, the quilt straightened out as they straightened the blanket over his poor body for the grave. Opposite, by the door, was a tall, athletic form, with his stump of an arm resting on a pillow, and his only hand grasping a daguerreotype case, except when he laid it down to wipe away the tears that the picture of some loved one at home brought to his eyes. Maimed, sick, with one hand gone for his country, and the other longing so to clasp his dear ones, no wonder his eyes were wet with tears and his bosom filled with sighs that almost groaned for utterance. And thus it was through the whole room. The cobwebs hung from the dark ceilings and darkened the low arched windows, and the rain came heavier and fiercer and rattled the casements, and the poor boy closed his eyes to shut out all sight, and pulled the quilt over his head to deaden sound, and cried again softly to himself, and said over and over again, "Oh, that I was dead!"

"Ha! what's the matter here, my soldier! Aint getting discouraged, are you?" was the exclamation in cheery tones, as a firm, yet gentle hand uncovered the poor boy's face, and revealed to his misty sight, his favorite nurse standing by his side, with a nourishing broth in his hand.

"Well, what is the the use of living?" was the reply in the querulous tone of sickness. "I am a burden and plague to everybody!

None cares for me; just think how long I have laid here, and you have not brought me one letter. I don't care, I do wish I was dead; perhaps somebody would think of me then!"

"Don't blame any one but that rascal, Morgan! I wish I had him by the neck! I have not had a line since you was brought in here, and I have the nicest little woman, who is always scribbling. Folks at home are not to blame, let me tell you; it's only those guerrillas that do the mischief. But poor Ned, over there, is looking so wistful. I will set this down and you must eat it all if you can, and be a good boy, and when I come round to-morrow I will bring you something," and he was off before a question could be asked.

The hours at last dragged into a night more doleful, if possible, than the day. The few lamps were shaded, and the nurse that came in at the six o'clock bell wore a coat buttoned up close and walked with a stiff, formal tread like an automaton. His eye was a cold blue, and never had in it the least glimmer of a smile to cheer a sick, discouraged heart, and if he did the slightest act, even shook up a pillow for an aching head, it was with a reluctant gesture as if stern duty prompted the act, not love that fills each movement with airy grace. The rain still dropped from the eaves, and thick black clouds covered the sky and shut out the light of the little friendly star, that through many a lonely night had looked down and cheered the poor boy into patience; and restless, with dull pains, the after-van of his long, scourging sickness, shooting through his body, with little sleep and more moaning, the night at last passed away.

So helpless and despairing had the soldier become of late that he scarcely raised his eyes when the hour came for exchange of nurses, and he only answered, with a slight repelling gesture, the offer of the gift promised the night before.

"Now, you are not going to refuse my present, are you, when we sent clear over to Nashville to get them, with a few other things, to make you all comfortable, my boy. When I first saw these I thought, 'Just the thing for Clay, for he must begin to sit up, and it wont do to have him put his feet on the cold floor;' and now, you will not even look at them!"

"If it was only a letter," was the pleaded excuse.

"Well, the bridge will be up this week and the cars running, and I promise you three the first mail that comes through, and you know I always keep my word, so take your slippers

and eat your broth, and be ready to stand in the shoes by ten, for I am coming round then on purpose to help you up."

The broth had a little extra flavor, thanks to the stores that had run the blockade of guerillas safely, and after he had sipped it to the last spoonful and scraped out the dish, he turned listlessly on the pillow and took up his gift. Plain and substantial; made of thick broadcloth, and bound with braid; nothing very attractive, yet they looked cosy and comfortable, and he whirled them on his finger, then with the restlessness that springs from having nothing to do, he turned them inside out to see what they were lined with. Now came such a glad start and smothered scream of surprise—

"Mother's dress, as I live! I know it by those little funny spots that dear Bell used to call eyes, and here is the outside of father's coat! It was just such a queer snuff color, and mother has ripped them both up to make shoes for the soldiers! Oh dear! it seems as if I was right there, handling over their clothes, and knowing mother was thinking about me all the time she was washing and pressing them out so smooth. I thought they had forgotten me—so sick, and nobody coming in that I knew, and not even one short line from home; but now I know better, and I never will think so again!" and the thin, pale lips, as they whispered this last sentence, closed with a smile; and when the nurse, an hour later, came around to help his patient up, he found him sleeping quietly, with the slippers pressed against his cheek, and his lips whispering—"Home! Mother!" as if talking to himself in a pleasant dream.

"Fit for the convalescent barracks next week, my boy!" was the verdict as the nurse pressed his fingers on Clayton Selden's wrist, careful not to arouse the sleeper, wondering to himself if the slippers had not had the same effect on his patient that he had hoped a letter would have—fanned to a flame the fluttering light in his poor body that had seemed actually dying out for want of a little hope or joy to brighten it into a blaze.

BEREA, OHIO.

The Story of Janet Strong.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

PART I.

"There's no use in my trying to make anybody of myself; I'm only a servant girl, anyhow. Everybody treats me in a way which shows they despise me, or at least don't think I'm of the smallest account, just because I'm nothing more than a kitchen girl. Nobody in the house to talk to but Biddy, the chambermaid, and black mummy, the cook. Of course, I know I'm above them; but nobody else thinks of it, and it'll always be just so—always, unless——"

The face of the girl who had indulged in this monologue had settled down into some want and pathos which was almost plaintive—a little girl's face still, for she was small for her years, and they were only sixteen.

She was dusting a large and luxurious parlor, in a listless, abstracted sort of fashion. The great brush flashed in and out of the carved rose-wood, and the velvet and plush, which made cushions softer than moss, over the heavy marble tables and the rich gilding of the volumes that lay on them.

A girl with an exceedingly pretty face, soft and rounded, and that promised to be in its full blossoming what most people would call handsome or beautiful. Large, clear blue eyes, a fine complexion, faint roses, which always seemed on the very point of deepening and widening in the dimpled cheeks. Lips of bright red, with the pleasant expression of girlhood hovering like an incipient smile about them, and bright, abundant brown hair—this is the picture of Janet Strong, as she looked wielding with her bare round arms the great brush in Mrs. Kenneth's parlor that morning.

This young girl's history, running up the borders of those sixteen years, is that of a narrow, colorless, cramped life.

Her father died when she was a baby; her brother, several years her senior, went to sea and was lost.

They lived in the country, and until Janet was ten years old, her mother managed by the exercise of the most rigid economy and taking in whatsoever plain sewing was thrown in her way, to keep soul and body of herself and child together. Then her health failed, and she sank into her grave.

One of the neighbors took Janet, and for two years the little motherless girl had a comfortable home, and learned to do light

housework, and take care of two or three lumpy, lymphatic babies.

She was a bright, "handy" little creature; but the neighbor's oldest daughter grew up to fill her place, and then the little girl was sent into the factory to do light work.

So, in that groove was set the next four years of Janet Strong's life. Her work was not hard, and she was rather a favorite with the hands; and although her associations were anything but of an elevating, refining character, still she was a bright, cheerful, good-hearted little thing, and did not seem to absorb the evil in the social atmosphere about her. That bright, childish face, was a testimony of the innocent, pure little heart that throbbed beneath it.

At the close of Janet's fourth year at the factory, a lady, who had been stopping at the village hotel a few days, made application at the house where Janet boarded for a girl to go out to easy service in her city home.

She wanted an American girl, one who was trustworthy and active, and who could relieve the chambermaid and cook of some of their duties.

Janet's young imagination was at once dazzled with the prospect of seeing the city, and there was no one who had either the right or the disposition to exercise any authority over her movements. Mrs. Kenneth was pleased with the girl, and a bargain was completed to the satisfaction of both parties. So Janet came to the city—the little wondering country orphan girl, full of interest and amazement at the new sights and the busy thronging life which on every side opened before her.

Mrs. Kenneth was a somewhat exacting, but not on the whole, hard mistress. She was a lady of wealth and influence, occupied a high position in society, and a prominent one in the fashionable church, of which she was a member; a woman of respectabilities and conventionalities, by no means altogether heartless—one who would have honestly recoiled at the thought of being a hypocrite.

Mrs. Kenneth was the president of one benevolent society and the secretary of another, besides belonging to a visiting committee for the orphan asylum, and being one of the managers of an institution for infirm old ladies; indeed, she enjoyed an enviable reputation for great executive benevolence.

But for that young life just opening into girlhood under her roof, with its pitiful lack of all experience—of all judicious counsel,

with its opening capacities for enjoyments, with its dreams and fancies; its hungers and cravings, its chafings and limitations, this woman, wife though she had been and mother though she was, had never a thought or a care.

Janet was to Mrs. Kenneth a servant—a being of a different sphere—not to be overworked, certainly, to be well fed and sheltered, for Mrs. Kenneth was not penurious, and her instincts of order and comfort embraced somewhat all who were under her roof; but beyond this she never went. Janet Strong's nature was quite out of her range of sympathies, regards, interests. Her very presence betrayed this to the girl's keen, susceptible instincts. That cold, mild voice unconsciously but absolutely disclosed to her just what position she occupied in her mistress' regard. She belonged to an inferior order. There was no common ground of the womanhood or human needs on which these two could meet in this woman's thought. Into the secret place, where the soul of Janet Strong, her servant girl abided, her mistress could never come. The atmosphere was too coarse there; it savored altogether too much of whatsoever was common, and coarse, and humble, for Mrs. Kenneth to enter, with her refinement and graciousness. The most she could do was to be "kind" to that sort of people—a kindness which always had some subtle power of impressing them with a sense of the immense distance between them. Janet was not slow to learn it. It cost her some keen pain—some loss of self-respect, for in the sleepy old factory town the differences in social position were not so sharply defined, and Janet had never regarded herself as less worthy of esteem because she was an industrious little girl, and earned her own bread after her mother died.

And there was a natural grace about the child, and so much brightness and adaptation that a single year's change of life and social and mental cultivation would have placed her in all apparent respects on an equality with most of the young girls who visited Mrs. Kenneth's daughters.

So the young girl's life was a solitary and desolate one under the stately roof of Mrs. Kenneth. She was naturally of an affectionate nature, and her soul restless, hungry, cramped, wanted something to lean on and grow. She had no society, for the people in the parlor were as much above, as those in the kitchen were beneath her. Biddy was a good-natured Hibernian, of the garrulous, gadding type; and "Mammy," with her red and yellow tur-

bans, was the victim of moods, sometimes running over with jokes, and shaking her fat sides with laughter that fairly threatened to suffocate her, and making Janet laugh too, until the tears filled her eyes, and then sharp and crusty, making it a moral impossibility for Janet to please her.

The girl's young three mistresses were kind on the whole, lent her books, which solaced many a weary hour, for Janet had a good deal of time to herself, and Mrs. Kenneth's daughters never read works except of a sound moral tone, and among others, Janet devoured Abbott's histories with a great delight.

So six months rolled over Janet—slow months they were, after all, with a good many burdens and heartaches, and a longing for something, she didn't quite know what—something good, and beautiful, and grand in the world, and that kept her awake nights, and that made her carry through the day a dim, vague sense of wrong, defiance, discontent, and gave a certain wistful look to her face.

One evening the family had all gone to some party, and Biddy was as usual off amongst her friends, and Mammy had gone to bed with a headache, and so the whole house was left to the sole charge of Janet. She was unusually restless that evening, wanting somebody to talk to, and going out on the veranda and looking up at the great stars which hung thick in the sky, like golden buds, ready to break into great fields of blossoms, and wondering whether her mother could look down from far above them and see how lonely and desolate her little daughter was, and how she longed to throw herself down at her mother's feet and hide her head in her lap, and cry away some of the slow ache, and cold, and unhappiness, which had been at her heart that day.

And while she stood there looking at the stars, the bell rang, and startled Janet with the consciousness that there were two great tears on her cheeks.

She brushed these away, and proceeded to the door. A young gentleman stood there, who started as the girl opened it, and revealed herself in the gaslight. Indeed Janet looked sweet enough to strike anybody that evening, in the pretty white and blue plaid that she had on for the first time; with the roses a little wider than usual in her cheeks, and her brown hair in soft, thick braids about her ears, for Janet had some artistic sense of pretty and becoming colors and forms.

"Excuse me," said the dark, handsome

young gentleman, who hardly looked his twentieth year; "but is Mrs. Kenneth, my aunt, at home?"

It was very flattering to find that the young gentleman did not suspect she was "a servant."

"Mrs. Kenneth and the young ladies are all out, sir, this evening," answered simply the girl, with the blushes brightening vividly in her face; and there was nothing in the tones nor the manner of Janet Strong which betrayed to the well-bred young gentleman her true position in his aunt's household.

"Thank you, miss; I've run up to the city for a few days from college, to see my father, Mr. Crandall, Mrs. Kenneth's brother, of whom you probably have heard her speak."

"Yes, often, sir," stammered Janet.

"And I should like to crave the privilege of coming in and resting myself a few moments, for I've had a long walk, not taking kindly to the crowded omnibuses this evening."

"Certainly, sir," answered Janet, holding the door wider, a good deal flattered, a great deal pleased, and feeling a little awkward in her false position.

Mrs. Kenneth's nephew came in to the softly lighted parlor, and Janet, hardly knowing what else to do, inquired if he would like the paper.

"Oh, no; thank you. Are the servants all absent, that you are left in charge of the house and the door, this evening?" asked the gentleman, with a smile, his dark eyes fixed admiringly on the face of the girl.

"No, sir—that is—you are mistaken," and now the blushes rolled in a crimson tide up from the girl's cheeks to her forehead, making her face prettier than ever. "I am one of Mrs. Kenneth's girls, and often wait on the door."

The young man was really so astonished that he did not speak for a moment, but his face did for him—

"Is it possible—I should never have dreamed it."

Poor Janet! She felt at that moment more keenly than ever before the humility of her position; and it was natural she should seek to extenuate it in some way, for she dreaded the dreadful fall she must necessarily have in the estimation of Mrs. Kenneth's nephew.

"I was not always like this," she said, in an apologetic, appealing way which was really touching, "but my mother died a long while ago, and I had no friends, and so was obliged

to take care of myself, and this is the first time I ever lived out."

"It's a shame, a real shame," and he spoke out of his heart then, for he really did feel sorry for the young girl, and angry at her fate at that moment.

Then the gentleman asked her to sit down, and Janet was quite used to sitting in the parlor during the absence of the family, as Mrs. Kenneth thought it somewhat unsafe to leave the front of the house quite unoccupied when the windows were open.

So they fell to talking—this young man and Janet; and the girl soon felt considerably at her ease before him, although it always fluttered her when she encountered his eyes, looking with such undisguised admiration on her face. She took care not to meet them very often, however, but she was quite certain that his gaze never deserted her face.

Robert Crandall was a great favorite with young girls and women in his own position. Handsome, graceful, with remarkable conversational gifts of a certain kind; impulsive, generous, social, he was regarded as one of the best fellows in his class; and the beauty and simplicity of Janet Strong—the surprise on the discovery of her real position, and—let us be just—some pity for her loneliness, and her being so evidently out of place, aroused the interest and touched on the sympathies and the romance of Robert Crandall's nature.

It was certain the young man had never exerted himself more to make a favorable impression on any young lady than he did this night on Janet Strong—never watched with more eagerness the effect of his words and manner than he did on that shy, drooping, half childish face.

"You must find it very lonely here, I am sure, occupying a position so trying to one like you in this household." This was said in a tone of deep and grave sympathy which could not but find its way to the heart of a young girl in Janet's situation.

"Oh, very. You see Biddy and the black cook are not society for me, and there are many times each day when I am lonely and unhappy."

"Poor child! I can well understand it. And you have no relatives, no friends to remove you from all this?"

"Nobody," said the mournful voice of Janet Strong, and so she was drawn into telling this kind stranger the little plaintive story of her life. She did it in her eager, simple way, with a meaning in her face, and tones which gave

the words new force and picturesqueness, and certainly Robert Crandall did not lose any of them. He said a great many sympathetic, comforting words to Janet, which fell into the poor little, lonely, half frozen heart, like precious warmth, and light, and dew; and after an hour or two had slid away in this talk, the gentleman looked at his watch and discovered that it was really very late.

"I wish I could be of some service to you, Janet," he said, as he rose up. "You must permit me to call you so, and regard me always as a friend or a brother who would gladly serve you if he could. I suppose you've seen very little of the city, shut up here?"

"I go out two or three times a week, and to church every Sunday, and I've learned my way through a great many streets."

"Still it can't be half so pleasant going alone. I should really like to show those bright eyes of yours—blue as the mists of your country hills—some of the sights in our great city. If you could only get out some evening now, and take a little walk with me?"

"Oh, you are too kind, Mr. Crandall," stammered Janet, her face aglow with delight.

"I am so only to myself then. But to this matter, when shall you have an evening to yourself?"

"Oh, almost any time that Biddy will stay at home."

"Well, supposing we arrange a walk for tomorrow evening. It will be pleasanter to avoid all remarks, and more in accordance probably with your wishes, as it is nobody's concern, and there is, of course, not the shadow of an impropriety in it, to say nothing on the subject to any person. I will be on the corner of Eleventh street at eight o'clock, and you can merely state to Aunt Caroline you wish to meet a friend not far from here. I am sure you can manage it easily, and the walk will be certain to do your health good."

"Oh, yes, I can manage it," said the timid voice, with a little tremulous flutter of pleasure and excitement in it.

He bade her good evening; then, taking her hand and pressing it after, to say the least, a most friendly fashion; and so they parted.

"Well, this is an adventure," murmured Robert Crandall to himself as soon as he gained the street. "Quite a romance in fact. It's a shame for that pretty little face to be buried up in this fashion. I can imagine what sort of a life she must lead under my stately, very

proper, and dignified aunt's shadow; and yet there's the making of a lady in that girl. It'll do her some good to see a little of the world, and of course I wouldn't do her a particle of harm in any way—of course not."

Robert Crandall held himself an honorable gentleman, and believed that he would scorn to do a mean act, or one for which he would blush for shame before his fellow men. He was the son of a rich man, and had led a luxurious, self-indulgent life. He was now twenty-one, had a good stand in his class, and although always ready for a jolly time with his classmates, was never guilty of any serious misdemeanors, unless sometimes breaking the tutors' windows, or getting a little too "gay" at some supper, could be named among these; "but then," his father said, complacently, Robert was only twenty-one, and you couldn't quite expect a fellow to get over sowing his wild oats at that time.

The young man certainly did not analyze the motive which had prompted so much effort on his part to make a favorable impression on his aunt's domestic, or the feeling of exultation which thrilled him at the evident result. Robert Crandall was not much given to probing his own motives or impulses.

Janet Strong went up to her room that night in a tumult of excitement and pleasant emotion. Poor child! It was no wonder that she caught at this new experience which had broken so suddenly into that dull, empty, desolate life of hers. It swept off like a great high tide from the shores of her barren existence all that aching sense of humiliation and insignificance which she had carried through so many weary days. This handsome, refined, elegant gentleman had evidently found a great deal in her to admire. Her woman's instinct assured her of this. How it suddenly elevated her in her own estimation! What a sweet offering to her long wounded self-love was the thought. She stood before the mirror in her small but very comfortable chamber, and looked at the face that smiled back on her there, with the soft, bright flush in her cheeks, the new gladness in her eyes. Then, first, there dawned upon her the conviction that she was pretty—beautiful. She had never thought much of it before, although the girls at the factory had told her she was sure to be handsome some day; but now there was danger of her overestimating her personal attractions, as women are very likely to do. She looked at her hands—nice hands they were; almost as small and fair as her young

mistress's, for the light factory and domestic work had hardly enlarged or darkened them. It was evident she had not appreciated herself at all; she thought with such a pretty, gratified smile, that one could have forgiven the vanity which lay at the bottom of it, and which was in some sense the natural assertion of her womanly nature, if there had not lurked so much danger in the wake of that feeling. And Janet Strong lay awake a long time that night thinking over all that Mrs. Kenneth's nephew had said to her, and of the walk which they were to have to-morrow evening, and which altogether seemed so much like a beautiful dream, that she was almost afraid she should wake up in the morning and find it one.

Oh, mother, smiling in thy eternal joy among the angels in Heaven, remember, if thou canst for a moment, the little child thou didst leave on earth, and if it be permitted, plead for her, long and earnestly, for a great temptation is drawing nigh, and there is none on earth to help or to deliver.

The next evening, a little after the appointed time, Janet hurried down the steps of Mrs. Kenneth's dwelling, in a flutter of expectation, hope, and wonder.

She found Mr. Crandall at the street corner, and he came forward to meet her eagerly, saying—

"It seems as though I had been waiting a long time for you, Janet!" and then he gave her his arm, with the grave courtesy that he would have offered it to the most accomplished lady of his acquaintance.

It was a pleasant evening in the early summer, with its solemn, far-off stars, that seemed faint and dim because of the golden stream of gas-light which throbbled down the air as far as their eyes could reach. They walked through the pleasantest thoroughfares. It was not likely, Robert Crandall thought, they would meet any one who could recognize his companion, and for his acquaintances, he did not mind—not one of them would suspect, as she leaned on his arm, that she was not some young girl in his own sphere.

As for Janet, she gave herself up to the enchantment of the time. What a new beauty and glow the world put on to those blue eyes that would not be cheated of their youth's right to life and gladness!

It was astonishing how soon she began to feel at home with Robert Crandall—to confide in him just as was natural in the only friend she had in the world—how she told him all

her little every-day troubles, in which he manifested so much deep and delicate sympathy, and her thoughts somehow seemed to clear themselves into appropriate words; for Janet's mother, though in no respect a cultivated woman, was, by nature, a refined one, and in the first ten years of her life she had never had any coarse or lowering associations, and her language betrayed this.

They walked a long time, although it seemed short to Janet, and at last Robert Crandall insisted on taking her into a saloon, where Janet was fairly dazzled, and seated at one of the small marble tables, the young man ordered fruits, and cake, and cream, and pressed them all on her with the kindest solicitude.

Janet reached home that night a little before the house was closed, which was not until eleven, and no questions were asked her. All Mrs. Kenneth's servants had friends in the city, and so they were in at the appointed hours she did not trouble herself with inquiries into their affairs.

But Janet did not leave her new friend until she had made an engagement to visit Greenwood in his company some afternoon in the following week, which he again suggested, it would be as well not to mention to any one. He disliked to have curious people prying into his affairs, and he would be at the corner at the appointed hour. It was not difficult for her to obtain leave of absence for an afternoon and evening, and that visit to Greenwood was one long ecstasy to Janet Strong. How the heart of the country girl feasted on the sight of the green woods, the soft plush of the cool grass, the great trees, and the singing of birds. Among the beautiful walks, by the lakes and fountains, in the green and silent shades, she walked in a land of enchantment, and Robert Crandall enjoyed keenly this young, fresh, innocent nature laid bare before him. He still manifested the same deep, respectful interest in her happiness, and he had a thousand delicate ways of implying that he regarded Janet as quite his equal, only shamefully out of place, a kind of lost princess indeed, who must sometime occupy the place to which nature entitled her; and that, in some way, he intended to assist her towards this; in short, he was a kind of elder brother, on which she must absolutely depend for counsel and guidance.

An older and wiser head and heart than Janet's might have been allured by all this delicate flattery, and she knew so little of the world, and nothing of the arts of men!

It was during this visit to Greenwood that

the young man insisted on Janet's dropping her formal "Mr. Crandall," and calling him "Robert," just as his little sister would. After this, Janet Strong led a charmed life, living in an atmosphere of intoxicating bliss. Several times every week, during the next month, Robert Crandall and she managed to be out together. He escorted her to various places, to picture galleries, to the museum, to the theatre, and on Sundays he accompanied her to church; and so Janet's life consisted in these meetings.

The world had become an entirely changed one to her. The sad, half wistful look, as of some cramped, hungry soul, had quite gone out of her face. It blossomed into new hope and beauty. Even Biddy and "Mammy" were conscious of the change, and commented on her growing good looks.

For much of the time she seemed fairly to walk on air, and it was with difficulty she restrained the light and gladness at her heart from overflowing her lips in sudden songs, and snatches of poems she remembered!

Can you wonder that this lonely, desolate child, out in the cold and darkness of the world, reached out eagerly for the first warmth and light that fell into her life? I charge you that you neither smile nor condemn her; but rather weep tears of pity over her, for her heart was the heart of woman!

Still, there were times when there stole a little shadow among this girl's thoughts—a faint unsinness or depression. Some delicate instinct of hers recoiled from this long concealment of all acquaintance betwixt her and Robert Crandall. When she reasoned with herself on the subject, it seemed just right—the only thing to be done—but that vague feeling still protested against it. This strict sequecy looked as if there was something wrong about the matter. She wished sometimes it could be conducted openly; and yet there was no one in the world whom she could make a confidant of. The idea of going to Mrs. Kenneth was too appalling to be entertained for a moment; in short, there was no help for it just now. Sometime it would be different.

Ah, this Janet Strong had once a good mother, a Christian mother, and in the early spring of her life she had sown her seed, not knowing which should bring forth fruit, this or that. But those early influences had not lost themselves. They gave their tone to the child's character, when the mother's lips were dust. Janet was wholly unconscious of it; but in a thousand ways her mother still spoke,

and in this faint recoiling from whatsoever was not open and honest, but savored of dissimulation, might be traced the effects of her childhood's teaching—of that moral atmosphere in which it had taken root. Oh, good mothers, humble mothers, faint-hearted mothers, still striving, amid many cares and much of trial and disappointment to bring up your children in the fear and the love of God, you little know day by day what work you are doing—what harvests you are sowing!

"Unless—" Our story has gone a long way back of that word with which its first paragraph closes, where Janet Strong stood with her duster in Mrs. Kenneth's parlor. Somehow the shadow we have mentioned lay heavier than usual on her heart that morning. She had been out the evening before with Robert Crandall at a concert, and on their return, they had stopped for some refreshments, and it happened that the house was closed a little while before the girl got in, and Mrs. Kenneth had heard the door bell ring, and said to Janet next morning, in a tone of cold reproof, "Those friends of yours must not detain you so late another evening."

"What would the stately lady say if she knew who that friend was!" Janet chafed against this thought, feeling that she was practising some deception on her mistress; she chafed too, against her present life; she began to feel that she was suffering a great wrong in being limited to it. Indeed the legitimate effect of Robert Crandall's influence must have been to cause her keen dissatisfaction with her present lot. But of a sudden the face of Janet leaped out of its discontent, and a new thought brightened it—"Unless Robert Crandall should fulfil his promise of finding her soon some new and more congenial position! And could she doubt his will or his power to do this—her friend and brother?" Janet's thoughts never went beyond this relation, and though she loved and trusted him as a solitary heart would be likely to its one friend in the wide world. She did not crowd the perspective of her future with any dazzling visions of marriage. Silly child! and yet in her innocence and ignorance to be almost envied too; she thought that the relations betwixt her and Robert Crandall must continue forever, that he would always be her best, wisest, noblest friend, a tower of strength and comfort about her life.

"I mustn't get impatient," murmured Janet, giving the last touches of her dust brush to some vases on the mantel. "Didn't Robert

tell me to have courage a little longer, and the way would certainly open for me out of all this. I must go up stairs and look at the beautiful brooch with its burning carbuncle centre which he gave me last week, and he said that his own sister would be proud to wear it. It always makes my heart grow warm to look at it. Oh dear!" and a long drawn sigh, half of pleasure, and half of a great variety of other feelings, completed the monologue.

Just then the front door bell rang.

The Story of Janet Strong.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

PART II.

"There is a lady in the carriage who is ill," said the driver, whom Janet confronted at the door.

And before the bewildered girl could answer, a sweet, pale face put itself out of the carriage window, and asked—

"Is mamma—is Mrs. Kenneth at home?"

"Oh, it's Miss Louise!" exclaimed Janet, remembering that Mrs. Kenneth's eldest daughter, whom she had never seen, was daily expected home from a lengthy absence with some friends in the country.

"Yes," smiled the young lady, faintly, leaning her head back against the cushions. "I am she. Wont you call the girls?"

Janet descended to the pavement.

"The young ladies are gone out with Mrs. Kenneth," she said; "but I can call Biddy."

"No. I prefer to get in quietly if I can, and the thought of Biddy's loud sympathies jars my nerves. I'll try to get in with the aid of your arm, driver; for it makes me dizzy to move. There are my travelling-bag and some bundles in the carriage. Wont you attend to them?" The young lady addressed these words to Janet, while she was slowly preparing to alight.

The driver assisted her into the house, and Janet following with the bundles, found her on the sofa, quite exhausted with the effort she had made. Janet's sympathies were keen; moreover, she felt drawn at once to this sweet-faced, pleasant-voiced young girl.

"Can't I help you, ma'am?" she said, coming forward with her eager, sympathetic face. "I'll do anything that's in my power."

Louise Kenneth raised her heavy eyes to the girl's face.

"Yes. I think you can. Just remove my bonnet and shawl, and help me up stairs, to my own room. If I can only lie down there, and get this dreadful motion and noise of the cars out of my head!"

Janet had what New Englanders call a "handy" way of doing things, a swift, light, executive touch, so soothing in a sick room, so grateful to throbbing temples.

Louise Kenneth discovered this, as she softly untied her bonnet, and unclasped her travelling cloak, and the sick girl went on talking, half to herself, half to Janet, her face paling and burning alternately.

"I suppose I was very injudicious to attempt such a journey alone; but I was disappointed in my promised company, and came the last hundred and fifty miles quite alone; and I began to grow ill almost as soon as my travelling companions left me. What a long, tedious night it was!"

"It must have been. Now, if you will only lean on me, I will help you up stairs carefully. Don't be afraid, ma'am. I'm very strong."

It was well for Janet that she was, for before they reached the stair-landing, Louise Kenneth was seized with such a sudden faintness and dizziness that she was compelled to lean her whole weight on Janet, or she must have fallen to the floor. At last, however, Janet got the sick girl to her bed, darkened the room, and cooled the burning forehead with cologne water. Once under the touch of those soft, magnetic fingers, Louise Kenneth opened her eyes, and looked at the young face bending over her.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"Janet—Janet Strong. I have been living with your mother several months."

"I am very glad to find you here. You must stay with me, Janet, until I fall asleep. I shall wake well enough," with that sort of clinging, helpless feeling which comes with sickness, and soon after she sank into a slumber, restless and fitful.

Great was Mrs. Kenneth's surprise and solicitude when she learned, on her return home, of her daughter's sudden arrival and illness. But Louise Kenneth's prophesy did not fulfil itself when she awoke. She was with difficulty made to comprehend where she was, and heavy drowsiness and fierce excitements of fever alternated with each other. Of course the family was greatly alarmed, and the family physician, who was called at once, tended little to allay the fears of the mother and sisters.

The fever, he said, had set in vigorously,

and it would probably be several days before it attained its height. It was too late to arrest the disease now, and all that could be done was to give the patient absolute quiet and careful nursing.

The doctor's prediction was verified. For more than a week did Louise Kenneth lie in the grasp of that terrible fever which fired her pulses, and frenzied her brain. Her life was not in immediate peril, still there was room for terrible anxiety on the part of those who loved her. Mrs. Kenneth would not allow any one to occupy her post by the bedside of her suffering child, but the light feet and skillful hands of Janet were often called into requisition in the sick chamber. Perhaps it was best for her that she had something at this juncture to arouse her sympathies and occupy her time, but in that light certainly did not Robert Crandall regard it. I do not wish for a moment to imply that he did not feel some regret at his cousin's serious illness, but the annoyance and vexation which he experienced in the deprivation of Janet's society, certainly in a great measure absorbed all other emotions.

For this girl had become the central object of his thought. He remembered with a feeling of exultation which he had not the courage to analyze, that Janet was without friend, protector, or relative in the world who had the slightest claim on her, and he was resolved to place her in circumstances where their interviews should not be subjected to the slightest danger of espionage from any quarter.

That matters could not go on long in this way, the young man had sense enough to perceive, and a discovery of these surreptitious interviews might transpire any time, and involve him in most embarrassing explanations. The best plan was to get Janet away from his aunt's, and out of the city, and Robert Crandall devoted several days to the concoction of some method by which she could be induced to remove to the city where he was studying.

It would not do for her to go out to service. In case she did, his visits would at once subject both of them to remark and suspicion; but after dismissing various plans which suggested themselves, one entered his mind which he turned over on all sides, and then settled upon as presenting no serious objection, as had the others. In the city where the college was located, was a confectionery establishment much frequented by the students for its pleasant, cosy, attractive belongings. Betwixt Robert Crandall and the proprietor, an easy, off-hand acquaintance had for some time ex-

isted. This store employed two or three young girl-clerks, and Robert Crandall was certain that his influence could procure Janet a situation here.

"It will be doing her a great favor to get her in this store, for it's highly respectable, and it's a shame to have such a girl in my aunt's kitchen any longer;" trying to cheat himself even, by glossing over facts which he had not the moral courage to face with words like these. For Robert Crandall was young in years, and fresh in evil, and the better side of his nature still recoiled from confronting any deed of wrong; and thus far he laid no plans beyond getting Janet this situation in the store.

He wrote to the proprietor a letter which brought a prompt and favorable reply, with no suspicion on that individual's part that there was anything more than appeared in the matter, for Robert was careful to represent Janet as a friend of his in depressed circumstances, whom he was anxious to serve.

A vacancy, which Janet could supply as clerk and waitress, would present itself in a few days. And with his usual tact Robert Crandall approached the matter in his next walk with the girl, concentrating all his former suggestions and promises about exerting his influence to rescue her from her present position in the revelation which he now made.

He first aroused her curiosity and interest by remarking, in a tone pendulous betwixt significance and exultation, that his efforts had at last been crowned with success, and that he had secured Janet, his little sister, a position which he could see her occupying without feeling that she was shamefully out of the place for which nature designed her, as some rare moss rose would be among thistles and sunflowers; or a beautiful, sweet-voiced canary among owls and crows.

The foolish little heart throbbed with wonder, the pretty face flushed all over at the sweet flattery.

"Oh, where is this place—what is it?" eagerly asked Janet.

Robert Crandall was in no hurry to gratify her curiosity. He went on descanting upon the time, and care, and diplomacy it had cost him to obtain this situation, and representing all these as ten times greater than they really were.

"Oh, dear, how good you have been to me, Robert, my brother, my only friend!" and a fond, grateful glance stole up to him from the child's blue eyes filled with tears; a glance of perfect faith and trust.

Robert Crandall drew his breath hard. Somehow that look made him feel for the moment, that he was a villain. But he thrust the feeling with a plausible lie to his conscience—"I am not going to do this girl any harm. It is for her good certainly, to accept this situation."

And when he spoke again, he told Janet, who held her breath for interest, what and where the situation was, painting it in most attractive colors, and as being advantageous in all respects. Janet was half bewildered at this rose-colored portrait of her future; but her mind sought refuge in a practical fact.

"I've no doubt it would all be very beautiful, Robert, but I'm afraid I shouldn't suit. I never waited on a store in my life, and I don't even know how to weigh out sugar-plums."

"Oh, well, you dear little shrinking, frightened soul. I've no fears on that score. You'll learn soon enough, and give ample satisfaction, I'm confident; and then, only think, Janet, we shall be so near together, and I can have such a brotherly care over you, and I've promised myself so much pleasure in the nice walks we shall have together, with no need of concealment then; and there are so many delightful rambles about the old town to which I want to introduce you."

"Yes; that will be best of all," subjoined Janet, her fears vanishing before her companion's confidence in her abilities.

It is in the nature of woman to rise equal to the occasion, to prove herself all that is expected of her.

"And then, there is the salary. You haven't asked me about that, little Janet."

"I haven't thought of it, really, Robert—you were telling me so many good things."

"Well, this isn't the least of them. You are to have your board and two hundred a year."

The girl stood still with surprise. This was three times the amount Mrs. Kenneth paid her. She seemed suddenly to have come into the possession of a fortune; and glowing visions of beautiful dresses, and charming hats, floated through the child's imagination. Robert bent down his dark eyes to her face, and saw that surprise had quite deprived her of speech.

"I didn't expect so large a salary," he said. "In a year I expect you'll be able to earn thrice as much as that, but we must be content with small things at first. And now about the best time and method of your coming, for I must have all that settled before I return to college, which you know must be day after to-morrow."

"I shall tell Mrs. Kenneth that I am going. I think that she will be satisfied with a week's notice."

But Janet's proposition did not at all tally with Robert Crandall's plans. Like all people who are bent on accomplishing something they are ashamed of, the young Junior was extremely fearful that his secret would somehow get to the light. He believed that his aunt could not readily supply Janet's place, and would not relinquish her without reluctance; and she would be very likely to make embarrassing inquiries about Janet's future destination.

The girl was too honest, and too little used to intrigue or deception of any kind, to be a match for his aunt in a matter like the present; and if Mrs. Kenneth's curiosity or suspicions were aroused, her nephew knew very well it would be no easy thing to baffle her. He knew he could trust Janet to the death unless, getting an inkling of some wrong about to be done her youth and innocence, his relatives should work on her fears, or her conscience, and the whole should come out, and then what a denouement there would be.

He was brave enough in most things, this Robert Crandall, but he fairly shuddered at the thought of such an exposé of his conduct. He spoke a little more decidedly than he was aware of, under the influence of this feeling.

"No Janet, you must not contemplate for a moment, telling my aunt that you intend to leave her roof. She would be certain to suspect something, and annoy you with all manner of inquiries. You must get off without letting a soul know where you are going."

Janet looked at him, amazed, half appalled. "What, run away, Robert, as though I was a thief! You don't mean I must do that?"

"Not as a thief certainly, my dear child," in a greatly modified tone. "But I want to save you from the trials to which I see you will inevitably be subjected if you do not take my advice in this matter. I have arranged it all perfectly for you. I have engaged a trusty man, who was formerly a gardener of my father's, to come for your trunk some night that we shall decide on. You must have it all ready, and he will convey you and it to the cars and see you safely on board. Of course you won't mind riding all night, and you will reach Mystic depot about nine o'clock in the morning, at which place I shall meet you, and we will take breakfast, and have a delightful ride of fifty miles together."

"That will be charming, Robert," responded the girlish voice. "And yet," with a little

timid appeal of tone and manner, "I *should* like to tell Mrs. Kenneth that I am going. It has a strange, wrong look to go off without saying a word, and I shall only explain that I am going to my friends, which is quite true, and as for their finding out any more—you know I can keep a secret, if I am a girl!"

She said this with a certain mingling of dignity and archness, which was quite bewitching in the eyes of Robert Crandall. He was too shrewd to attempt to argue the matter farther. He knew the side where the little heart was weakest.

"Well, Janet, then, if you will compel me to tell you all, I shall be saved a great deal of pains and trouble by your falling in with my plan. I have devoted so much time to arranging this matter, that I have not a moment left to devise any other, glad as I should be to please my little sister, or relieve her from any foolish scruples on her part. But she knows that I would not advise her to any wrong step, or one that circumstances did not fully justify, however things may seem. Janet, you trust me, your brother, in all things—will you fear to in this one?"

The manly, pleading voice—the tender, smiling eyes; they were irresistible. She believed in this man with all her soul. Poor Janet!

So it was settled at last that some day in the following week, Janet should have her trunk ready, and the gardener should call for it at the side door, which she always attended, and where his presence would excite no remark. On the same evening, Janet was to meet this man at the corner, who would accompany her to the cars, and meanwhile telegraph to Robert Crandall, so that he would be certain to meet her in Mystic.

The gardener was a good, honest-hearted fellow, Robert said, with whom he had been a favorite when a boy, and who only knew, in a general way, that the young student wished to get her a situation in a store, and that there were reasons for keeping the affair entirely secret for the present.

So, in a tumult of feelings, mostly glad ones, Janet parted with Robert Crandall; and his leave-taking was so regretful, and tender, and grave, that it could not but leave a deep impression on her susceptible nature. And at that moment there was not much acting on the part of Robert Crandall, for he really was fond of the girl, and it went sorely against him to part with her even for a week.

He walked home rapidly after he had watched

her disappear in Mrs. Kenneth's side door; and once some thoughts stirred him, which made him set his lips and his face darken desperately for a moment. But the next moment he laughed—a light, forced laugh, and muttered to himself—

"As if I was doing this child any wrong, or laying any plan to, by getting her a snug little berth at the confectioner's. It's a perfectly respectable place, and one to which the dear little innocent soul is just adapted, and I'm sure I've no reason so far to repent the favor I've done her, and I never intend to."

Now there was just truth enough in this reasoning to furnish a moral opiate to the conscience of Robert Crandall. He was neither good enough nor bad enough to meet the future—to look at its consequences fairly in the face; and if sent by warning angels, there came sometimes over him foreshadowings of bitter remorse, that might be remorse that must inevitably sting through all the years of his life, for wrong that could not be atoned for, he thrust them down with sophistries that only half cheated himself, for down deep in his own soul, Robert Crandall knew that in the hour that Janet Strong went out from his aunt's roof, trusting herself and her innocence into his hands, in that hour, she was *lost! lost!*

The week that followed was hardly a happy one to this poor, flurried, bewildered Janet of ours. She tried to believe it was. She reasoned herself over and over again, into the belief that she was doing just what was right and best under the circumstances, and each time was satisfied that she had convinced herself beyond the possibility of doubting again that this surreptitious departure from Mrs. Kenneth's was perfectly justifiable under the circumstances. But, before she knew it, she was fluctuating again; again she would find herself among the old doubts and fears; the moral instincts of this girl would assert themselves, the old, blessed, *mother-influence* would make itself felt. Some vague foreboding still hovered over her, some fear, some doubt that she could not have concentrated in words, some intuition that she was not doing a fair and honorable thing to run away from her home in this fashion. She tried to put away all such haunting thoughts and fears by dwelling on the future, on the new, charmed life that awaited her, on all its pleasures and independence, and best of all, on the constant society of her only friend, her handsome, noble brother Robert Crandall.

What plans she laid of self-improvement in all directions, so that he should never be ashamed of her; she would make a lady of herself for his sake, and Janet, though now disposed to set a much higher value on her gifts of mind and person than formerly, did not suspect quite how far nature had assisted her in these aspirations. Then she would chide herself as wicked and ungrateful towards the friend who had taken all this pains and care for her sake, not to be willing to be guided by his wishes and better judgment in this matter as in all others.

Oh, my reader, I charge you that you feel no contempt, only pity, all embracing for this girl, lonely, friendless, orphaned, over which just now it seemed that angels might almost weep and fiends exult. Well for it for you, if in her strait your wisdom were greater, your motives purer. For no suspicion of Robert Crandall's truth, fidelity, brotherly devotedness ever crossed the thoughts of Janet Strong. To her he was the incarnation of all nobleness, tenderness, honor—of all those great and gentle qualities which go to fashion a young girl's dream of manhood. And if away back in her soul was any latent instinct of doubt or fear which judicious counsel might have developed, she was now wholly unconscious of it.

Still, just at this time she did hunger more than ever for some friend into whose ear she might pour her whole story—it seemed as though the telling it would relieve that sort of uncertain pain, which carrying such a heavy secret sometimes made at her heart. If her mother was only living now! and then Janet's thoughts would go back to the sorrowful, loving face, and she would wonder what she would have said to all this, whether she would just have approved of this secret departure—the mother who taught her young daughter that a lie was sin, and who sowed her seed away off in the dawn of her child's life, not knowing whether amid the rains and the sunshine it would take root; yet, oh dead mother, from afar off thy still small voice still speaketh in thy child's soul.

Robert Crandall in the meanwhile was impatient for Janet's arrival; he could not feel at ease while she was under his aunt's roof, and his letters urged her to appoint the day that she would come to him; besides, he affirmed the proprietor of the store to whom she was engaged needed her services at once, and then followed an allusion to somebody else who needed her society more than all the rest,

and who would not be content until he had his little protégé under his own sole care and protection.

Precious fact, put in most graceful, flattering words; and in a flutter of pleasure, and gratitude, and affection, Janet sat down, and with infinite pains wrote her first letter, and although the handwriting betrayed a certain stiffness, still on the whole it would not have done discredit to any schoolgirl of her age, and Janet appointed the day that she would come, and afterwards she set her face steadily against all misgivings. It was too late to be troubled now, she told herself, and set to work to packing her trunk.

In the meanwhile Louise Kenneth was recovering from her illness, and able now to sit up for an hour or two in her chair. The young lady had taken a fancy to Janet, who had been with her much of her illness, and made herself so useful and grateful to the invalid that she had several times received the commendations of Mrs. Kenneth.

Louise had a finer, broader nature than her mother. Her sympathies took a wider range—her character was nobler, richer, fuller of warmth and impulse. Then she had been for the last six months in a finer, more healthy atmosphere than that of her own home. The aunt after whom she was named was of different grain from Mrs. Kenneth. Nobler motives, and deeper flowing sympathies swayed her life. She worshipped neither respectability, position, nor any other of the gods of this world. Her home and personal influence had reached the best part of her niece's character. Louise had cleared her way out from a good many social illusions; her moral horizon had broadened; her aunt said the truth of Louise when she affirmed that she would be a sweet and noble woman. And one day it happened that this girl sat in her great easy chair, her pale, sweet face resting among the cushions, and her idle fingers playing with the tassels of her rose-colored dressing-gown, while she watched Janet arranging the glasses and vases on her dressing cabinet. It happened that the two girls were quite alone. Louise was in that softened, sympathetic mood, which convalescence brings to most natures, especially to one like hers. And as she dreamily watched Janet, the pretty face, the girlish figure, the swift, light movements, some new feeling of interest and pity came over the other's heart, which at last cleared itself into words—

"Janet, you have been a great comfort to me, ever since I have been ill."

Janet turned at the soft voice, with a touched, pleased look.

"I am very glad to hear it, Miss Louise. I hardly supposed I should ever be that to anybody here."

The girl did not know it, but a little pathos crept into the last part of her speech, and there was a certain dignity in it too. Janet had not been so intimate all these weeks with a man of Robert Crandall's cultivation without a certain growth of speech and manner. Both of these struck Louise; and her next remark, although in some sense a general one, was made with the purpose of drawing out Janet.

"I suppose we all have feelings of despondency and uselessness sometimes when we are lonely or oppressed, but you see, as in your case, they are often untrue."

"I'm glad to know that; and yet those who have friends to love and care for them, I should think would never have those moments of which you spoke."

"But, Janet, you don't mean to say you have nobody to love and care for you?"

Janet thought of Robert Crandall and drew a long breath, still there was a sigh in her voice and face, as she answered—

"I haven't a relative in the world, as I know of, Miss Louise."

The heart of Louise Kenneth was stirred for pity.

"No father nor mother, no brother nor sister, Janet?"

"Not one. They are all dead," softly and sorrowfully answered the girl.

Louise Kenneth looked at her, standing there in her youth, and loneliness, and beauty, and thought how all these might be a snare to her. She thought too, with a kind of shudder, of the cold, hard, desolate life that Janet must lead, and a great longing came over her to be of some service to the lonely orphan—to say some words of comfort, sympathy, warning, that she would always remember.

She forgot what her mother never could, that Janet was a servant, and met her on the common ground of their womanhood.

"Janet," she said, "come here, do, and sit down on this cricket, and tell me the story of your life. I want to know all about it, because I am your friend."

The sweet words unlocked Janet's heart, and she went and sat down and told her plaintive little story, sometimes broken for tears, of her childhood, of her mother's girlhood, of the long years in the factory, until she came to Mrs. Kenneth's, and here Janet stopped

abruptly. She could not speak of that one flower which had blossomed and brightened with color and fragrance the barren spaces of her life.

But her listener's intuition supplied much that the girl left unsaid. She knew that Janet must have a dreary, starved sort of life under her mother's roof, so far removed in character and sympathy from the servants, so far in position and circumstances from their mistresses. How she longed to speak to this girl some good, true words, that might avail for right in some great temptation and crisis of her life, and in that moment of pity and yearning, Louise Kenneth half involuntarily put out her hands and stroked the girl's hair, and it seemed to Janet that her mother's hand was there again.

"I understand, Janet, all that is sad and lonely in your life, in your position here, and I am sorry for you from my heart. But for all this don't get discouraged, my child. There may be a life of much usefulness and happiness before you." Janet smiled softly now, for she thought of Robert Crandall. "And," continued Louise, "of one thing be certain, that you always respect yourself, that you never do any wrong hasty act, that even bitter repentance can in this world wholly atone for. The more lonely you are, the more apparently neglected and forgotten, the more reason that you should set higher value on yourself, and weigh more carefully all of your own actions."

Was some angel standing by and prompting the words of Louise Kenneth at that moment? Janet leaned towards her, her face flushed with interest, eagerness, and much which lay beyond all the speaker could fathom, as the girl seemed to drink in every word.

"And," continued Louise, drawn on by the girl's looks to say more than she at first intended, "you will know sometime, if you do not already, that you are pretty beyond what most women are, and men will be likely to tell you of this, and seek you and flatter you because of it. And herein may lie your greatest danger. I warn you—I, your friend, only a few years your senior, beseech of you to trust no man's promises, though he talk like an angel, if he attempt to persuade you into any act which your highest, truest judgment shall not approve. Do not be won by plausible talk or by appeals to your affection into anything that is not open, and candid, and true, anything that you would be ashamed that others should know. When a man urges you to any course of conduct which involves secrecy and

deception, be sure that some evil lies at the bottom of it."

Janet listened with parted lips, and face that grew ashy pale, she covered it with her hands and trembled from head to foot.

"What is the matter?" asked Louise Kenneth, a faint suspicion of something wrong seizing her; but Janet's first stammered words diverted the suspicion.

"It is so hard—I have no friend to tell me what is right. Why haven't I, just like you, a mother to love and care for me, and a happy home? What is the reason that I must be all alone and desolate in the world?" She spoke with a kind of fierce vehemence, as though her life had been defrauded of its rights, and her soul at last roused itself to utter its protest against the wrong.

And Louise Kenneth entered into Janet's feeling at that moment, and all the wealth, and care, and tenderness, which had been about her life seemed for the moment to rebuke her.

"Janet," she said, almost humbly, "I cannot understand it any more than you do. I think you deserve wealth and love, and all the pleasant things of this life, just as much as I, or my sisters. But perhaps your life will be as happy and as useful as ours, and it may be that the question which it is so hard to solve now will be answered, and we shall know what these differences in human lots mean. They have puzzled wiser heads than ours. But God does not regard them however man may."

Janet looked at Louise Kenneth, and the sweet, pale face stood unconsciously that probing gaze which went down into her soul and searched amidst it. A sudden impulse seized Janet to confide to this girl all the story of her acquaintance with her cousin. She should not be afraid nor ashamed with her. She would hold nothing back.

Her lips parted, and—but just then the door opened, and Mrs. Kenneth entered the room. She looked a little surprised, although not displeased, at seeing the positions of the two girls.

"I hope I haven't interrupted a tête à tête," she said, which was a wonderful condescension on the part of Mrs. Kenneth, as the remark was addressed as much to Janet as to her own daughter.

Lucy Lawton,

AND HER NEW HOME.

BY MRS. M. F. AMES.

CHAPTER I.

"Then you are determined, Lucy? Will nothing induce you to recall your promise to that Edward Lawton?"

"Nothing, aunt. If my heart prompted it—which it does not—I would never risk my happiness with the curse of a broken promise pursuing me, as it most assuredly would do."

"But think, Lucy! The one who now offers himself, is so well suited to you? Handsome, intelligent, and in a business that would give you a luxurious home; and that home, close by me, who love you so dearly! I should be proud, Lucy, to point to you as my niece, and the wife of Dr. Burton. While the other"—and she hesitated.

"Well, what of the other, aunt?" and a look half defiant came in the young girl's eyes.

"Nothing but his poverty. How can you, reared as you have been, be content with a home in those horrid woods? A log cabin, perhaps, with backwoodsmen and their families for associates! Do not do this foolish thing, Lucy! If not for *my* sake, think of your dead mother; and my sister, and recall your promise! Ask to be released, and no one but a savage would refuse you."

"My mother's early home was in as wild a place, as the one to which I expect to go. Your father, and hers, was a pioneer in the wilderness, as I have often heard her say."

Mrs. Lindsey winced a little, but quickly replied—

"True, and a good reason why her child should never be subjected to the privations that her grandparents endured."

"I am sorry to displease you, aunt, but I engaged myself to Edward Lawton with your consent, and you must not blame me if I now refuse to break the engagement."

"But that was before his father died insolvent—or nearly so,—and I expected to see you move in a circle suited to the manner in which you had been reared." And tears of vexation sprang to the lady's eyes.

Lucy came softly to her chair, and kissing her cheek, said—

"Forgive me, aunt! It must be so. Edward comes in two weeks, and expects me to return with him to his Western home; and I have no wish that it should be otherwise."

"So soon? And I must give your answer

to Dr. Burton, and tell him you are to be married in two weeks? You might have done so much better, Lucy!"

In due time the wedding came; and the proud little woman, by its splendor, tried to hide from her friends what she considered the sacrifice of her beautiful niece. Dr. Burton was among the guests, and took no pains to conceal his disappointment.

CHAPTER II.

In a heavily timbered county in Michigan stood, or rather did stand, at the period of which I am writing, a dwelling composed of roughly hewn logs, and interlocked at the corners by notches, and cemented by mortar at the interstices. It was a large-sized dwelling, for one composed of logs, and the roof, extending beyond the main building, formed a rude porch, the floor of which consisted of riven logs, known in Western Parlane as "punchoon."

Convolvulus, and Alleghany vine twined lovingly around cords up to the roof, and then, unaided, crept along the low eaves, forming a complete fringe, and half shading a bird cage, whose yellow occupant sent forth a musical challenge to his not less noisy neighbors of the forest. Ivy clambered everywhere on the rough logs, as if it would fain hide the unskilful work of the builder. Snowy muslin curtains were parted, wide, at the low windows, that looked even smaller, from the thick wall of the building. A wing—also of logs—was attached to the part already described, for a kitchen. A log barn, and two or three other outbuildings, constituted the group.

The heavy forest trees had been removed from, perhaps, fifteen acres; and this "clearing" was divided, by a rail fence, into a wheat-field, corn-field, potato-field, and a little plat, by a merry brook, known as the meadow. A little garden, paled in with riven strips, completed the "improvements," if we except a few slender fruit trees, that struggled above their shorter-lived neighbors in the corn-field, as yet guiltless of fruit or even blossoms.

And in the dwelling lived Mrs. Lawton and her two sons, one of whom was at the village to meet his brother, who was hourly expected with his bride, from one of the Eastern states.

"Five o'clock!" said Mrs. Lawton, as the clock on the mantel struck the hour. "The stage comes in at four, and they will soon be here. Did you put water in the pitcher in their room, Jenny?"

"Yes, ma'am. Please go in and see how

nice it looks!" and she stepped to the door of a little room, one of two, partitioned off from the living room of the family.

Mrs. Lawton arose and followed her, smiling at the eager movements of the girl, who acted as help in their little household. She was the daughter of one of their neighbors, and was treated more as a child than a servant. The room was small, very small; but it contained a snowy robed bed, a wash-stand, a toilet-table—of home manufacture, as was the wash-stand—and two chintz-covered chairs. The wall was hung with newspapers, but so nicely fitted, margin to margin, that the eye delighted to rest upon it. A strip of soft-colored carpet was tacked down, just before the bed, while on the toilet-table, and before the little glass, was a tiny china pitcher filled with roses and pinks. Jenny looked at the flowers, and then at Mrs. Lawton, with a degree of pride, not to be understood by one who has access to such treasures all the summer.

"Why, Jenny! Where did you get those roses?"

"I ran home and got them while you was sleeping, after dinner. I thought, maybe, she had roses at home, and these would make her room seem more home-like. I picked all there was on the bush. It has only been out two years; and it came near dying the first year. I hope she won't be homesick, like poor Mrs. Cooper was, and fret herself to death."

Mrs. Lawton's heart sank, for a moment, as she asked herself, "what if she should be homesick?" But no, she would make her so happy that she *could* not be. She had known her, when blessed by a mother's love, and now, she would be one to her, in act as well as name; and thus musing she smoothed the rounded bed, stooped and gathered a straw from the white floor, and then, setting one of the chairs by the only window, so that its occupant could look out upon the waving grain, said—

"Thank you, Jenny; your roses will be appreciated by the bride, when she knows how scarce they are. And now, you may lay out the table."

The table was soon spread; and a tempting table it was, when all was ready. The cloth was a miracle of purity and glossiness; the plain white ware, well chosen and well kept; the cutlery, neat and polished; and the silver, although but little, multiplied itself by its own brightness. Nor were the edibles lacking in quality or arrangement. Cold fowls, of almond-like brownness; bread, white and

feathery in its lightness; butter, a perfect golden hemisphere; pickles, crisp—not green—Mrs. Lawton was afraid of green pickles; the cake, as no one but Edward's mother could make it, and kept in countenance by a dish of sweetmeats, made of maple sugar and wild plums. And last, but not least, was a plate of wild honey, glistening in its cells.

When all was completed, Mrs. Lawton sat down on the little porch to await the arrival, while Jenny, still more eager, went to the little gate, and peered over it to catch the first appearance of the team of oxen, that was to convey them home.

At last, her watching was rewarded; and with the glad cry, "they are coming," she yielded her place to Mrs. Lawton, whose impatience outstripped the slow brutes, and passing through the gate, she hurried down the road to meet them, and was soon clasping in her arms the tired wife and daughter.

"I could not wait any longer for you, my children," she said, as if half ashamed of her childish eagerness. "Those oxen are so slow, Edward!"

"Yes, mother, and if Lucy prefers to do so, we will try and reach home before them," and passing one arm around her, and giving the other to his mother, they walked the short distance to the dwelling.

It was just such a welcome as Lucy had yearned for; and as she entered the neat but humble dwelling, felt no regrets, and only wished her aunt could know how pleasant it seemed to her.

Edward Lawton was a man of but few words, and said nothing, although he looked eagerly in the young face for some sign of vexation or disappointment, as she looked timidly around the room. With a woman's instinct she understood the unasked question, and placing both her hands in his, she said, softly—

"I like it very much, Edward; it is far nicer than you led me to suspect. I shall be perfectly happy here."

CHAPTER III.

Ten years have passed away, and we again stand upon the farm of Edward Lawton.

The fifteen acres of "clearing" have grown to fifty; and others have crept up and joined it, until the country around looks like that of the older states, near the sea-board. True, the forest trees loom up dark and heavy in the background. But the owners consider them now as a source of wealth; as a railroad makes its way among those same trees; and the

whistle from a steam saw-mill, on the land of Edward Lawton, answers back to those on the great thoroughfare of Michigan.

Daily, and almost hourly, cars are freighted with the precious commodity, for the vast prairies of Illinois, of which nature has been so niggardly to that State. And the returns have come in bountifully. Neat, commodious dwellings have sprung up; school-houses are not few, or far between; and, gleaming through the trees, towards the railroad, is the spire of a church.

True, there are stumps in abundance; but it is summer now, and the waving grain and whispering corn-leaves have seemed to enter into a charitable compact to, as much as possible, hide their uncouth proportions.

Fruit trees, that would surprise an Eastern farmer with their rapid growth, dance and nod in the sunlight, with their wealth of fruit. Edward Lawton is no farmer's apprentice, and all the fruits, known in the Western States, are represented.

The old house has disappeared, and on its site stands a large, well-constructed farmhouse. A running rose clammers up each column of the piazza; while convulvulus and Alleghany vine creep timidly to its embrace, and then fringe the eaves, as at the porch of the old log house; for Lucy loves old friends.

No canary cage hangs among the vines now, but two beautiful children make sweeter music to the parents' ears than any birds could, as they laugh at their play on the grass. But one shadow has fallen on the household, since Lucy became an inmate. Good, kind Mrs. Lawton, the loving mother, is sleeping by the husband of her youth, back in the state from which she came. She was a great loss to them all, but to none more than Lucy; who felt that she had been twice called to stand by the death-bed of a mother. Time has dealt carefully with the young matron; or else happiness has fed the roses in her cheeks, and the lustre in her eyes. Mrs. Lindsey is now making her first visit, in the home of Edward Lawton; and Lucy, in her neat morning dress, is conversing with her in her usually pleasant tones.

"And so, you never regretted your choice, Lucy?"

"I, auntie!" and a joyous laugh rang out, that could only come from one of the happiest hearts in the world. "Why, I would not exchange homes with the most pampered lady in the land!"

"But how did it all seem to you when you first came? You have written me some things,

but tell me more. You never wrote me anything about your journey."

"Did I not?" and a smile of pleasant memories came over her face. "The railroad was only completed to within thirty miles of where we now live, and the remainder of our journey must be made by stage, to the 'village.' And over *such* roads, aunt, as *you* never saw, I am sure. Bridges and causeways, made of logs, that kept us in a constant jolt when on them; and when off, in mud or bouncing over low stumps, or the roots of high ones. First one wheel would drop into a cavity of mud, and then the other; and then, perhaps, before we were fairly righted, a wheel would go tilting over a stump or root, and we would be shook back to our old position, only to be repitched somewhere else in half a minute more.

"Don't you drive rather recklessly?" said my husband, to our driver, at one of our stopping places!

"Fast, do you mean? Well, perhaps I do. But the mail must go through, sir."

"Yes, I thought, dolefully, and *females* too, if they live long enough.

"Why, this is nothing, sir! Sometimes we have to carry rails to pry out of the mud with. But we are light to-day."

"Whether he meant the vehicle or the passengers, I did not know, but I thought it quite as likely to be the latter; for I was sure, that if capsized into one of those seas of mud, it would take, not only a rail, but a rope, to get me out.

"At our first stopping place, an old lady got in, with a certain basket, that she handled very carefully; and which she soon took occasion to tell us contained geese eggs, that she was taking to her daughter, somewhere on the route.

"The pretty travelling hat you selected for me, had been knocked against the sides of the coach, until it looked more like a collapsed life preserver than a covering for the head. My gloves were worn to shreds, by clutching at the strap to steady myself; while my gray dress had become a print, from splashes of mud. But Edward was still more unfortunate; for at one time, when the crazy old vehicle gave an extra lurch, his hat fell off; and while trying to recover it, still another, and unprepared for this last, he lost his balance entirely, and pitched, headlong, into the old lady's basket of geese eggs!

"Laws a mercy! And the old goose is dead that laid um! and they was to be set

under a hen! And I don't believe there is another goose in the county!" said the old lady.

"Edward evidently thought it would have been better for him if she had died sooner; for such a plight as he was in! Broadcloth, and broken geese eggs were certainly never intended for close contact! His shirt bosom was splashed with the yellow mass; and even his face and hands came in for a share. He did give vent to his ill-humor enough to say, he thought there must be some more geese left in the county! but as the old lady was too obtuse to comprehend, his arrow fell harmlessly.

"The eggs are effectually *sot*," Edward remarked to her at last, and if you will tell me what you valued them at, I will pay you for them!"

"Laws, no, sir! I think you are the one that needs to be paid!" And I thought so too. But he insisted upon making good her loss; and she soon after stopped at a little cabin in the woods, where a troop of white-headed children were watching the stage, and came running to meet her, with the glad cry of, 'grandmother has come!'

"After she had left, we sat and looked at each other in silence; your niece and her husband, on their bridal trip.

"My wife will certainly make her appearance in her new home with a novelty in the shape of a hat. And our Western ladies are half crazy about Eastern fashions."

"I said nothing, but drawing a small looking glass from my travelling basket, I held it to his face.

"Geese eggs!" And I saw no more of my glass until I got home. We changed some of our clothing at the village; said 'village' consisting of a store, tavern, blacksmith shop, school-house, and, perhaps, ten houses; and those mostly built of logs."

"No saw mills, Lucy?"

"No, they have all been built since I came. William—Edward's brother, you know—was there to meet us, with a team: and as soon as we had made a little change in our dress, we were ready for the last stage of our journey. And now, auntie, guess what my last method of conveyance was?"

"Indeed, I cannot! Donkeys, buffaloes, wild horses, or even wild cats! I should not wonder?"

"Oh, no! Nothing half so sprightly as even a donkey! A lumber wagon, drawn by a yoke of great, unwieldy oxen."

"Well, you broke down then, Lucy? You was disgusted—homesick?"

"Not in the least! I had seen others riding thus, since I came into the State; and it was much more comfortable than that horrid old coach. Besides the establishment, such as it was, belonged to my husband. You cannot imagine what a sense of rest and security came over me, as the great, slow things crept along, under the overhanging trees, that almost met over our heads. Occasionally, Edward would gaze in my face, with such a wistful look, that I knew his heart was asking me again and again, if I was not vexed or sorry? But I was neither, as he has since well known. And when the distance was nearly completed, and our dear, kind mother, weary of the slow steps of our team, came with a child's eagerness to meet us, I knew I had found a husband, mother, brother, and home."

"Well, you was easily satisfied, Lucy! Any one but you would have moved heaven and earth, to have been taken from such a place. *I would not have remained!*"

"Oh, yes, aunt, if you had loved your husband, as I did mine! And that reminds me! I have never asked you what has become of my old quondam admirer, Dr. Burton?"

"Did I never write you about him?"

"Never!"

"Is it possible? Why, about two years after you was married, his wife came to claim him!"

"His wife?"

"Yes; he was about being married to one of our best girls, Sarah Dunton, when a wife, that he had deserted, in Maine, came and proclaimed his desertion."

"What excuse did he offer?"

"Oh! he professed to have obtained a divorce from her. But no one believed it, as he could show no proof; and his practice decreased so much, that he was soon obliged to leave; and is now living with his much abused wife—who is quite too good for him—in Maine."

"And that escape is to be added to my other blessings? Oh, aunt Lindsey! I am indeed one of the favored ones of the earth."

And when, an hour after, she told her husband of Dr. Burton, and asked him why she had been so favored and blessed in everything—he kissed her still blooming cheek, and whispered—

"Because you have tried to do right, my Lucy."

NEW BUFFALO, MICH.

Our Shadows;

OR, KITTY SUMMERS.

BY ROSELLA.

"She gave me a look that nearly killed me!"

These words have been with me all night and all day to-day. Kitty Summers said them to me yesterday, while gathering a bouquet for me in her nice little garden.

It came about in this way. Among Kitty's schoolmates in her girl-days, was one girl she dearly loved—Mary Reed. But, Kitty was beautiful—soft brown eyes, hair of that shiny tint between brown and golden—a lovely complexion of clear pink and white. She was admired, flattered and sought after; the magnetism of her wondrously fair face drew after her scores of admirers, and, at nineteen, in the full ripeness and flush of her girlhood, Kitty fell, and her poor name became a shame and a bye-word. Alas! alas! that it must be so!

From thence their paths diverged. And now it is seventeen years since that time. Kitty is married to a poor, good, honest man, and she is a good woman, and as happy as she can be with the old grief all the time tugging at and burning in her heart, and marring all the memories of her girlhood.

Mary Reed is married to the village store-keeper; she dresses grandly, leads in all the fashions, and is envied by the envious. She was dashing past Kitty's low, viny cottage in her carriage, when, as Kitty said yesterday, she gave her a look that nearly killed her. A look! Why should she do it? No good could come of it, and oh, so much sorrow!

Poor Kitty! She was standing beside a great, leafy, flowering bean vine, that shot up like a crimson flame, so full it was of pendent, swinging scarlet flowers; and she bowed her head against it and wept as she told me.

Poor Kitty! The golden shine still shimmered in her hair as she stood in the slanting sunbeams, the hot blood flushing her fair forehead, as she bent among the flamy flowers.

Oh, I thought as I soothed her, I had rather possess her meek, sensitive nature, clinging to everything beautiful, washed to dimness with hot tears, scarred with unkindly looks, and sneers, and scoffs, than be one of those cold worldlings, who live in fear and dread all the time of the criticisms of the Miss McFlimsseys and the Mrs. Grundys, and what the outside world may say of them.

He was "a man of sorrows" once, "and acquainted with grief." He was meek and

lowly, forgiving the outcast Magdalen, even, tenderly. He went about doing good, blessing the poor—caressing little children—what a precious example our Saviour was!

Yet we, with our lives only a span long, speak condemnatory words of our neighbors every day; we judge harshly, unkindly; we are selfish; we complain; we magnify our troubles and others' faults and shortcomings, and look upon ourselves and our conduct as right and irreproachable. And—smallest, little stinging deed of all, we give unkind, cold, sneering or harsh looks, to those whom we do not like.

Oh, if we would be at all like Christ, we must make our natures pure and unselfish, lovely and lovable.

We think of this every day, and yet feel that we do not get one step nearer the standard high up that we look longingly upon. We must strive to be more like Him, even if we fail in the attempt. Great obstacles that loom up like mountains before us, are easier overcome than the little difficulties that lie at our feet, and trouble us every day.

It is hard to smile pleasantly when we are annoyed—hard to keep back the angry retort—and very hard to be charitable in our judgment and liberal-minded, and serene-tempered, and perfectly noble in all our thoughts and deeds.

There is much comfort and much cheer, we think, for women, especially—for their lives are fuller of petty trials, and crosses, and wearisome annoyances, than men's—in the good old reliable words—"Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city."

Instil this mother-of-pearl proverb, then, into the minds of your children, mothers; at the same time cultivate meekness, and patience, and forbearance, and a serene sweetness of temper and demeanor—mindful of the looks we give, the little tell-tale glances—the "shadows we cast," believing, as we do, that in the sight of God and the angels, the greatest heroes are the humble, patient, forbearing, loving Christian mothers. Women unknown to the world, save in the little circle surrounding them.

We venture to say this in a tender, reverent fear, lest others, seeing with a clearer vision, may deem it sacrilege.

SYLVAN DELL, O.

Sunday at Mr. Rand's.

BY M'R.

"Children, stop that!"

That meant an attempt to sing, ending in a suppressed giggle, which in its turn ended in an unsuppressed laugh. The command and the tone changed the state of things instantler, and Lizzie, the oldest of the four, beseechingly exclaimed—

"Oh, father! mayn't we sing if we wont laugh?"

"Why don't you read your Sunday-school books?"

"We have been reading them ever since church, and we are so tired of sitting still."

The father hesitated a moment, because a hand was on his arm, and a low voice in his ear, saying, "Let them sing—do!" so he changed the stern refusal on his lips to—

"Well, sing, but mind you don't get into another such frolic!"

And having restored Sunday order, papa fell back to his former employment—that of discussing the sermon, while caressing the curls of a beautiful girl on the sofa beside him. She was not his daughter—she was too old for that, and she could not be the mother of his children, for a face so youthful and free from care had never seen twenty summers—but she was his wife; for a year the sunshine of her presence had dispelled the gloom that for three years had hung like a cloud over his desolate fireside.

"Do not talk about your inability to manage the children," Mr. Rand said to her the only time they were ever mentioned in the few months preceding their marriage, "I am always at home; I shall govern them." So she thought no more about it, but abandoned herself to the luxury of being petted and half adored by Mr. Rand. At the wedding, the children were duly introduced by a maiden aunt, and called her "our new mamma," and "mother," and received in return kisses, that some tearful lookers-on gratefully thought were earnest—sweet pledges of a mother's love and care for the future. Ah! they did not realize how amid all this bustle and ceremonious confusion, the bride was bewildered by the strange position she occupied, and absorbed by the effort to perform all the punctilious et ceteras of her situation with grace and ease.

After the wedding tour, she took possession of her new home, that had been newly arranged, expressly for her comfort, and to suit

her taste; then three months were consumed in receiving and returning calls; by that time the household gear was out of order, and must be oiled here, and renewed there, and changes made in various places; servants began to clash and threaten to leave, and so she must assume her place as housekeeper, and restore order, and learn by weary experience the many cares of housekeeping. Was it strange that amid it all she saw little of the children? And when she saw them punished or reproved for what conscience told her she might have prevented by a little care, was it strange that she consoled herself with the recollection of Mr. Rand's assurance, that he would govern the children?

Thus a year slipped away. To-day, while listening to a sermon on home duties, there had come over her a vague uneasiness—a sort of half consciousness that there had been something wanting in her performance of home duties, and she lost the drift of the inferences in her self-questioning—"Have I made my family happy?" Have I been a good mother? "Mother;" it reminded her of her own—gentle and indulgent; had she been *such* a mother to these orphaned ones beside her; and she glanced down at Lizzie's sober face, and thought of Willy at home, brimful of fun; had she shared their joys and sorrows? had she tried to make them good? Ah, it was a bitter reckoning, but better now than later. Conscience told her she had scarcely spoken to them, unless to give some order or chide for some short-coming. How often had she checked their childish mirth, because it did not suit her present whim to hear their innocent noise. How often had they come to her with some grievance, and met a stern dismissal, because she did not choose to attend to them then. When had she given up one hour of pleasure to amuse them? Never. Tears came as she thought how hard she had unconsciously been. "I will do better, God helping me!" was her resolve. And so she had come home full of her new resolution. Supper and her husband had for a while displaced it; but as she heard Mr. Rand reproving the children it had come back, not quite with its first force; but a short debate between self-comfort and conscience was sufficient. It was pleasant to be petted and caressed, to have her opinions and thoughts about the sermon drawn out, and listened to, as if they were all-important. It was a good way to fix the sermon in their minds. "Yes," said conscience, "but then the children don't

get much of it." "No more arguing that question. I know the right and I will pursue it;" and so by the time Mr. Rand was done speaking, and ready to settle back to his old employment, Mrs. Rand was just leaving her corner of the lounge. Her progress was arrested rather peremptorily, with a—

"Where now, Mary?"

"I am going to the children."

"No; the children are well enough now; sit down again: you had not finished that quotation that Mr. Mather used," and for a moment she was fairly overcome by the strong arm that drew her back to her seat. But her resolution was taken, and self grew weaker in the contest.

"Hadden't I? well, some other time will do for that. I want to go to the children a while now—please do let me!" and her entreaty was followed up by a little plea that she knew how to use, and reluctantly she was released, though there fell on her ear as she crossed the room—

"I wonder what has possessed you, Mary; next Sunday the children shall stay in the nursery," and Mr. R. picked up the Evangelist and consoled himself as well as he could among the "Family Reading."

Mary put back the curls that had fallen over her face in her efforts to free herself, and going to the piano, said—

"Come, children, I will play for you a while, and I think you will be able to sing better. What shall we have first?"

"Oh, goody! goody!" "That will be so nice!" and "That will be splendid!" were some of the exclamations that greeted her proposal, as they gathered with beaming faces around her. It took but a moment to set them adrift in a familiar melody. They had all a natural gift for singing that had been well cultivated in the older ones, so that it was no task to play for them, and indeed one could scarcely help joining in their childish enthusiasm as they sung with a will—"There is a happy land;" "We come, we come with loud acclaim;" and "Oh, come let us sing."

All went on finely and with great decorum, except when Willy, who could not remember the words, or did not catch the sound of them correctly, would now and then substitute one of his own. So it happened that just as they were in the midst of the "Gospel Banner," he astonished them by singing, a little out of tune, "And be the shout Susanna echoed round the world!" Of course a general shout followed quite equal to the first explosion that

"But will you tell us one when your turn comes?"

So there commenced a new era in the Rands' life. Mary has found a true pleasure in devoting herself to them, aside from a pleasing conscience. And though she may have made some mistakes in governing and training, that their own mother might not have made, still she has won their love, and they will follow where she leads, and while her trust is in God for daily guidance, she will not lead them astray.

THE NEW YEAR.

We have travelled past another of the milestones, and by just so much is the journey shortened for all of us. In one sense the thought will come sadly home to us all, and yet I think there must be few hearts who have not experienced at times a feeling of relief at least, at the thought that this life was not to last always. There are surely times when our hearts sink beneath repression, and limitation, and defeat; beneath the cares that rasp, and harrow, and gnaw; the burdens that oppress, and wear, and crush us, and the haunting consciousness of the contrast betwixt the life that is, with the life that might be.

Our souls shrink sometimes from the strain and stress, from the petty, wearing details of living, and it is hard enough for the best of us to keep ourselves in a still, heroic patience. Our feet come up sometimes into the mountains of exaltation and ecstasy, but they yield constantly to the moral gravitation of this world, and slide downwards. And it is not to be wondered at that we draw a long breath sometimes, and think, "Well, it won't be for always."

No, we shall find *that* out, some of these days, when we hear the voice of the angel of death, and the irritation and impatience are all over, and we look our last on the world that has seemed sometimes very hard and bitter to us.

I suppose the worst trouble is, the struggle with ourselves. If it is not, it certainly should be. The sense of incompleteness and unworthiness which we carry always, this it is, which underlies all our other griefs and makes life exceeding hard.

But let us be brave. Thought, deed, and word, which in their varied combinations have made the individual pattern of our lives for the year that is dead and gone to its burial, let us hold it up to the light and shake it out. Full of flaws, imperfections, abortions, it will surely prove, but hiding

it in the darkness will not make the fact any better, and the light will disclose all the faults, and show us where to avoid them in future. At least let us strive to make some improvement on the year which we now enter.

Broad and fair before us lies the unsoiled sheet of its days. One by one we must use them for good or evil; one by one they must be engraved and sealed by us. Let us take them softly, let us use them carefully. They are our only lot and portion whither we are hastening. Let us take heart of grace, and to one and all of you, oh, readers of our magazine, be happy this new year of our Lord eighteen hundred and sixty-four.

V. F. T.

The Story of Janet Strong.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

PART III.

"Louise," said Mrs. Kenneth, as soon as she was alone with her daughter, "I've just come from a long interview with the doctor, regarding you. He thinks we must get you off to the mountains as soon as possible. What do you think of starting as he recommends, the early part of next week?"

The young convalescent turned her startled face towards her mother.

"I am not strong enough for such a journey, mamma; I can hardly get across the room, now."

"And for that very reason we want to get you into a more invigorating atmosphere. My dear child," and the mother in her, made the voice and face of Mrs. Kenneth very tender as she leaned forwards and stroked the thin, pale cheek—"I want to get the lost plumpness and some fresh roses here; and we must carry you to the mountains in quest of them."

"Roses are not indigenous to this soil, mamma—I thought you knew *that*;" with a half arch, half languid smile. "I fear our quest will be as vain as the search after the 'Fountain of Perpetual Youth.'"

Quite delighted to find that her daughter was getting back to her old playful style of talking, Mrs. Kenneth made some bantering rejoinder, but soon recurred to her first topic. She made up her mind on Louise's immediate removal, and Mrs. Kenneth was a woman of great executive force. She never allowed small obstacles to stand in her way, and disposed of all those which her daughter, with the natural dread of exertion which comes with physical weakness, advanced to this suggestion, and at last Louise was half persuaded, half compelled into consenting to the journey.

After this matter was settled, the young girl's mind reverted to Janet, and her sympathy and interest impelled her to speak to her mother.

"Mamma, do you know I take a very unusual interest in this little Janet Strong?"

"I judged so, my dear, when I opened the door, and found you both in such confidential attitudes."

"She was telling me the story of her life. Poor child! it is a touching one, and I was trying to give her a little counsel, such as a girl in her condition—pretty, and poor, and friendless, would be likely to need. I owe her

at least a debt of gratitude; she has been so kind and thoughtful during my illness.

"Yes, I have been much gratified with Janet's care for you. She is, as you say, a nice, handy girl, very well-behaved, too, for one in *her* position."

"But, mamma, she is really above her position—quite out of place, indeed. I am sure she feels it, too, though she is never intrusive. She can't find the society in the kitchen very edifying or congenial, and is excluded, of course, from that above it. But I am very sorry for her. Under different circumstances, she has in her the elements of a real lady."

"You are a little enthusiastic, my dear. Janet is certainly superior to most servants, but she seems to occupy the position in which Providence has placed her, and may be very happy in it. If we should put any new ideas into her head, she would be likely to take on airs, and become dissatisfied. I have learned from experience that it is dangerous to meddle with people in her condition; somehow, they can't bear it."

How different was this reply from the one which Louise was sure her aunt would have made under the circumstances. The contrast between the two women never struck her so vividly before. Perhaps for the first time in her life, Louise Kenneth was painfully conscious of something hard and narrow in her mother. She felt some barrenness of deep-flowing, generous sympathies. All the doors on the tender side of Mrs. Kenneth's nature were locked and barred against such as Janet. Louise would not have put the truth so plainly as this, but a little sigh half articulated her conviction. Perhaps her mother heard it, for she added—

"I am glad that you take this kindly interest in the girl; I shall certainly do all that is in my power for her comfort and advantage."

So the conversation respecting Janet closed betwixt the mother and daughter. It was never resumed afterwards.

Janet Strong went to her room in a tumult of feeling such as she had never experienced before. A great crisis had come to this child's life. She little thought that this struggle was that old, new struggle of good and evil, which we must all carry, step by step, from the cradle to the grave.

The words of Louise Kenneth had only partially enlightened her; they had only quickened the intuitions, and doubts, and fears, which had troubled her so long.

Her faith in the man, Robert Crandall, was

by no means perished. His presence—a few words from him, would have dissipated any slight suspicions which, never crystallized in thought, might still have floated in her mind. Still, she *felt* the force of what Louise Kenneth had said—her innate truthfulness compelled her to it.

But the heart of this poor Janet turned away from its highest conviction of right to the sweet persuasions of its own inclinations and desires. It was not right, perhaps—but oh, it was so very natural!

That new home beckoned her, with all its pleasant prospects and promises—the one friend in all the world who loved her, stood waiting with open hands and heart to receive her; new, easy tasks, with remuneration, which in her eyes were like riches, were offered her. Pride, affection, aspiration, ease, self-love—everything, were in one balance. Ah, many a strong man has been bought with a less price than this to betray his highest loyalty to the right—many a woman has sold her birthright for a mess of pottage such as could not be named with this of Janet Strong's.

And then, in contrast with the new life, would rise up the old one—hard, and blank, and dreary, all the color and fragrance which Robert Crandall had given it vanished out of it. It made her heart ache to think about these times. She could not go back to them once more.

How could she grieve and offend the only friend she had on earth by refusing to go to him? Perhaps he would be so astonished and displeased that he would make up his mind never to write her—never to see her again; and no wonder if he did, when she was so ungrateful for all his care and pains.

"Oh, I will go—I *must* go," said Janet, over and over again to herself. She said it at her work, in her heart; she said it with her lips, in the silence of her own room; she said it when she first awoke in the morning, and she sank to sleep at night with these last words on her lips.

And how little Mrs. Kenneth, busy with her "societies and sewing-circles," her "Boards" and "Beneficiaries," dreamed of the mighty struggle which was going on under her own roof—that struggle which makes the one great Tragedy—the one mighty Reality of human life.

For Janet, although she told herself so many times she would surely go, still hesitated—still drew back. Something away down in her soul still protested, still warned, still entreated.

The soft, solemn voice of Louise Kenneth still echoed in the "wide, silent spaces" of her thoughts.

Confused, tossed, distracted, that conviction still held itself fast anchored in her soul that it was not honest—*right* to leave Mrs. Kenneth's house at the time and in the manner she had covenanted with Robert Crandall to do.

And to his credit, and Janet's too, be it written, that there had never transpired any word or act during their acquaintance which afforded her ground for the slightest suspicion that he was not in their relations all that he professed to be.

Something in Janet's youth and innocence had invested her with a kind of sacredness in his eyes, and Robert Crandall had always treated her with as much respectful tenderness as in a different way he did his own mother. The fond pressure of her hand, the soft kisses on her half-drooped forehead, had always in them that air of grave tenderness with which the young man might have bestowed them on the woman he was wooing for his wife; and in this there was no acting on his part—no coarse word, or jest, ever dropped from his lips in her presence. Thus far his aunt's servant was sacred in the eyes of Robert Crandall.

He took pleasure in the thought—a right one, sometimes—and alas! sometimes he took refuge in it, when there seemed to roll down from the future a solemn warning to him.

Janet's thoughts went over all this acquaintance with some new interest or curiosity—she could not have told *why* that last night, as she said to herself she should ever sleep in her little room at Mrs. Kenneth's, and there was nothing which suspicions far more alert than hers could have found to confirm themselves in any word or act of Robert Crandall's.

She heard the clock strike midnight.

"Oh, dear, I must be up early and pack my trunk to-morrow morning," said Janet, and she turned over, and after a long trial to forget everything, fell asleep.

And the next morning she was awake early, and packed her small wardrobe, for the man would call for it soon after dark.

But all that day she was restless and wretched—so much so, that once with a sense of utter loneliness crowding down on her, she was well nigh tempted to hasten to Louise Kenneth and confide to her the whole story. But some friends of that young lady engrossed her every moment of the day that she could sit up; so this was not to be thought

of, and probably Janet's heart would have failed her at the last moment.

Late in the afternoon she went up stairs to her own room again, and sitting down by her trunk sobbed passionately, for as the time drew near for her departure, some indefinable dread and foreboding seemed to grow on Janet Strong.

"I wish that I knew just what I ought to do," she murmured, with the tears dripping down her cheeks. "If my own dear dead mother was only here this minute, and I could lay my head right down in her lap and tell her just how it was, and ask her what I should do, and if she said, 'Don't go, Janet, my child, why, I wouldn't stir one step, not even for your sake, oh, my dear, darling brother, Robert Crandall.'"

And with this name there came another passionate storm of tears out of the little bewildered, distracted heart, but beyond the tears a voice seemed to speak, "Janet, you believe—you are certain in your own soul that if your mother could speak to you now, she would tell you never to take this flight."

Down there in the corner of her room by her trunk, Janet sat with the great tears a-drip on her cheeks, rocking to and fro, and deciding her destiny. The little maiden was in a sore strait. On one side was her dead mother's disapproval, for Janet did not attempt to refute the voice which had spoken the truth in her soul; on the other side was all which seemed to make life of any worth or gladness to her.

How she fluctuated back and forth, tossed on the winds and waves of her feelings and fears, I cannot tell—how the sweet young girl grew white and drawn with that inward agony—how she wrung her hands and groaned out her incoherent prayers for help—all this you must surmise for yourself.

But at last she sprang up, shaking in every limb, lighted her lamp, and with hurried breaths, which were like deep drawn sighs, wrote a note.

"DEAR, DEAR ROBERT—My friend and brother; I cannot come to you to-night. I have been wanting to all day. I long to now more than you can ever know; and it seems as though my heart was breaking to write this, but something away down there tells me I shall be doing wrong to run away without telling Mrs. Kenneth—that if my dear mother was here to-night she would tell me *I must not do this thing*. Oh, Robert! oh, my brother! my

best, my only friend, in all this wide, cold world, do not be angry with me, do forgive me, do still let me be to you

"Your loving sister,

JANET."

She folded this little epistle, so touching because it had leaped right out of her heart, and hurried down stairs, not daring to think the matter over for fear her resolution would fail her.

In a few moments her heart sprang up into her throat, for she heard the side door bell. When she answered it she found a large, tall man there, whose face she could not clearly distinguish in the semi-darkness, who asked her in a low, significant tone, if her name was "Janet Strong."

"Yes." She was shaking like a leaf driven about of autumn winds.

"Is your trunk ready?"

"No." In a low, rapid, but decided tone. "I cannot leave to-night. It is impossible. Here is a letter to Mr. Crandall, which explains all. Will you mail it at once?"

The man was evidently amazed and bewildered. He seemed uncertain what to do, and was evidently on the point of expostulating with the girl, or making some inquiries respecting her decision. But Janet in her earnestness and agitation would not trust herself to listen.

"You must get that to the post office at once—you must indeed," she said, and closed the door.

Then she went up stairs. She did not know whether she was glad or sorry for what she had done; but oh! if her mother in Heaven knew through what awful peril her child had passed that night, and from what fate she had been scarcely delivered, that mother's song must have throbbed with new, silvery thankfulness through the wide, white spaces of Heaven. As for Janet, she threw herself down on the bed, and worn out by the tumult of feelings through which she had passed, dropped into a heavy slumber, and it may be the angels rejoiced over her.

Four days had passed. They had been slow, miserable days to Janet, for she had not heard from Robert Crandall during this time, and a fear that she had offended him mortally haunted and sickened her heart. Her sense of right and wrong became greatly confused at this time, and there were moments when she deeply regretted the course she had taken, and accused herself of the basest ingratitude

in not trusting implicitly to the judgment of her only friend.

This internal strife blanched her cheeks, and banished the bloom and light from her face, in a way that would certainly have excited remark, if the whole family had not been much engrossed in the departure of Mrs. Kenneth and her daughters, for it was finally resolved that her sisters should accompany Louise to the mountains.

This evening of which I am to write, Janet was left quite alone in the house, for the young ladies were out at a party, and would not be home before midnight. And Janet walked alone up and down the parlor, her young face fallen into a great sadness and pain that was pitiful to see, with the doubt in her brain, and the pain in her heart.

The bell rang suddenly. It was nothing very unusual, but Janet's pulse fluttered as she went to the door, and opened it. There stood Robert Crandall.

"Janet."

The tone said all; there was no anger in it, only a reproof tender as a caress. She drew a long breath and tried to speak, but her words failed. Robert Crandall's heart was certainly very full of regret and pity as he looked in the pale face. He drew her into the parlor, and there her feelings made themselves way in passionate sobs and tears as she clung to him, in vehement joy and grief, this poor, lonely Janet!

Robert Crandall was deeply moved. He soothed her with words and soft caresses, as an elder brother would some little, wayward, troubled sister; and at last the sobs and the tears cleared themselves away, and Janet looked up and smiled in a sweet, tremulously pleading way, that was more touching than words can describe.

"Oh, Robert, I feared you were angry with me!"

"It would be impossible for me to be that with you, little Janet; but do you know you have been giving me a great deal of anxiety and trouble; so much so, that I could neither study nor sleep, and so at last I have come all this way to learn the truth from your own lips."

"I could not help it Robert. I tried to come, but something held me back, it was impossible."

He did not argue with her here.

"I want to know all about it. How any, any crochets got into your foolish little head or heart, and who put it there—you will tell me all, Janet."

"Everything."

And Janet did; commencing her relation with the conversation which had transpired betwixt her and Louise Kenneth; and all the doubts and fears, the uncertainty and pain which had followed it, until that last night when the thought of her dead mother, and the solemn conviction of her disapproval, had decided the matter; and as Janet talked the color stole back to her cheeks, her voice grew earnest and steady, the fear which she had entertained seemed legitimate and right, and she no longer regarded herself as weak and wrong in resolving to leave Mrs. Kenneth's in a different fashion.

Robert Crandall perceived this, and it made him uneasy: he could not fairly meet Janet on the moral grounds of her argument, and he evaded it by another issue.

"And so, Janet, you have concluded to give up your engagement, because of some vague fear or doubt, utterly without foundation on your part?"

She hastened to re-assure him on this point.

"Oh no, Robert, I am ready—I shall be glad with my whole heart to go, only I want to do it fairly, openly, honorably."

The words somehow slipped out of her lips. The late reaction had come; the strength and courage which sooner or later follows a great sacrifice for right's sake. Take care now, Robert Crandall. Her atmosphere is clearer, her intuitions are keener than ordinarily. The sophistries that will blind her here must be specious now. He resorted to the plea which had proved so effectual in their last interview.

"I have made a mistake, it seems," said the grave, tenderly, reproachful voice. "I believed this little sister of mine had perfect confidence in me, and when she knew that circumstances made it necessary for my sake that her departure should be kept a secret she would trust me."

The tears strained themselves into the blue eyes at that voice; but just then, like a silvery chime, stole across the girl's memory those solemn words of Louise Kenneth's, "Though a man plead like an angel, do not trust him before your deepest convictions of right."

"Robert," she said, "tell me what these reasons are. I believe—I know they must be right ones, only when I come to see them myself they will remove fear of doing wrong."

Her sweet, truthful eyes were on his face. How could he then and there make up some lie to suit the emergency. Her question went

down to the core of the wrong he had been doing. It stung him, and there was irritation and haste in his answer.

"No. Janet don't adjure me there. I can't tell you. There are reasons good and sufficient why I must keep this matter secret. Don't ride this hobby any longer."

She drew a long breath of pain and disappointment for answer. The words were not so much as the voice, and that did not bear with it a conviction of truth to the soul of Janet Strong.

"Well, Janet," in a half annoyed, half impatient tone, "we must come to some settlement of the thing, and not waste words in this fashion. Just put me out of the question now—what would you be most likely to do about it?"

He had unconsciously put the inquiry against himself, while it was his intention to do it in a directly opposite way. In her simplicity Janet answered—

"I should like to tell Mrs. Kenneth that I have made up my mind to leave, because I have found a new situation, and one which I shall like better."

"But don't you see, you foolish child, that the matter won't rest there; they will find out where you are going and get some notion into their head, and, first you'll know all our acquaintance will leak out—you may depend on that."

He was off his guard; the petulant, annoyed tones were not those with which Robert Crandall usually addressed her.

"I don't think they would take such a deep interest in my matters. But if they *did* learn that you were my friend, and had served me about getting this place, surely there is nothing in that which either you or I need be ashamed of, or to which they could object."

"The devil there isn't!" said Robert Crandall.

The words were out before he stopped to think of them. Janet's look of amazement, well nigh horror, recalled him to himself. Factory girl though she had been, servant though she was, Janet's habitual speech was as free from all coarse allusions, all slang expressions, as the truest lady's—a lady I mean by gift of God and cultivation of heart and soul.

"Robert Crandall!"

The words were hardly louder than a sigh, but there was in them something of pain, amazement, doubt, which it was not pleasant for the owner of that name to hear. He

hastened to obviate the effect of his words; but somehow he felt as though he was losing ground and dignity before the girl.

"Forgive me, Janet. I really was unconscious of what I said. You see what alarm and anxiety in this thing have done for me."

"I see, Robert," her face almost as sad as her voice.

"And don't you see too, that my family could never be made to understand an intimacy like ours. They would be certain to imagine there was something wrong about it, which we of course know there is not, but it would be impossible to convince them."

Another long-drawn sigh, born of another doubt, stirring itself into life at his words.

"Come, Janet," and Robert Crandall drew near her with the old tenderness in his manner. "Put away from you all these miserable doubts which harass and perplex you. You know nothing about the world, little innocent, lonely thing that you are. Trust yourself with me."

She looked up now, her face coming out into some new meaning, and her words clearing themselves out fervent with feeling.

"I know it is as you say, Robert. I am all alone in the world—no father, no mother, no friend but you; wanting above all things to do what is right, and puzzled and troubled to know what that is; and knowing too, because I am so lonely, and young, and ignorant, and that I must take the greater care of myself; that I must never do anything to be sorry for afterwards, when it is too late to change, and there will be no one to save me from the consequences of any rash or foolish act; and therefore standing all alone I must take double care of my actions—I must always respect myself."

Janet felt almost inspired at this moment: she certainly spoke and looked above her usual self; there was a dignity in her manner, as there was a force in her words, which would not have misbecome a queen. They reached whatsoever was generous or manly in the soul of Robert Crandall. He leaned towards Janet, and laid his hand on her shoulder, as she sat by his side on the sofa.

"Little Janet," he said, in a voice which his emotion made tender, "you are a good, noble girl, and I mean to be your true friend—always."

Her heart thrilled to his words. Her undefined doubts seemed to vanish away. And in that returning confidence she said to him—

"I will not ask you any more questions on

this matter, Robert, only if I was one of your own sisters, sitting here by your side as I do now, orphaned and friendless, would you tell her to leave Mrs. Kenneth's just as you tell me, and would these private reasons of yours justify you for it? Think a moment now, and answer me as you would if my dead mother were here to judge betwixt us two, and if you say 'Yes, I will go.'

She said this with a strange solemnity creeping into her voice and face, with those deep, truthful eyes searching away down into his, and when she paused Robert Crandall was not bad enough to utter a lie that he felt would be a curse on all his future; his heart or his brain failed him.

And in that moment a wild impulse seized the young man to secure Janet at all hazards, to take her at once from his aunt's, send her to school for a year or two, and then make her his wife.

"Where could he ever find," he asked himself, "a sweeter, purer, truer one. He would marry her privately, and when it was done, his family might storm as much as they liked; give Janet social and educational advantages, and he would match her against any of his lady sisters for grace, beauty, or intelligence, and it was his happiness and not their pride that he would consult."

The words had almost passed his lips, and then he drew back. In that moment when the better part of the man was uppermost, he dared not trust himself. It would be years before he could take Janet to wife, and in those years he might regret the promise into which the passion of his early youth had plunged him. If his honor was once pledged it could not be recalled. He did not know what circumstances might arise to make him sorely regret his rashness.

And perhaps with these noble thoughts mingled others less creditable to him. He had a young man's keen sense of ridicule which often springs from lack of moral courage. He thought how his classmates would laugh over his "misalliance," and the contempt and horror with which his family would say, "Our Robert has married Aunt Caroline's servant!"

Janet sat breathless, with her strained blue eyes watching the face of Robert Crandall. She could not tell all which went on in the heart beneath it, but she saw that he could not answer her question.

A great dread seized her. Her eyes were opened suddenly. It seemed as though all the anchors of her hope and faith were giving

way. She covered her face with her hands, and the cry of her soul wailed through the room—

"Oh Robert Crandall, Robert Crandall!"

It seemed to him that unconsciously her soul took vengeance on him with that cry. He had never felt so utterly humiliated in his life. He laid his hand on her arm, and his confession was stammered out, much like a culprit's at the bar, for he felt that moment as though he deserved almost any punishment for the sorrow he had wrought.

"Janet, I am a scoundrel, I know, and I cannot trust myself, but I never laid any plan to do you any harm beyond taking you away from here. I tell you this as before God. What I might have done afterwards, tempted of the devil, when you were in my power, I cannot tell, but I speak the truth now; look up in my face and see it."

She did look up with her pallid, frightened face, and so far believed him; but the truth had come to her suddenly—a blow that her soul fairly staggered under, and it moaned out as she rocked backwards and forwards more to herself than to him—

"Oh, Robert Crandall, Robert Crandall, I thought you were noble, and manly, and true to the core. I believed in you as I believed in my dead mother. In the whole world I thought there was no man to be compared to you in goodness, and you would have wronged and deceived me, and now I can never trust any one again; and I wish I was lying away out in the dark country hollow this very night by my mother's side."

And so the poor distracted soul made its plaint over its lost idol. Every word was like a blow to him who listened. In that moment Robert Crandall almost cursed himself for the part he had acted. His higher nature asserted itself, and for the time showed him the essential shame and dishonor of the part he had acted.

He went to Janet at last and lifted her head from her hands, where she had buried it, and he said, in a voice of such penitence as no human ear had never before heard from the lips of Robert Crandall—

"Janet, I acknowledge with sorrow and shame whatsoever wrong I have done in this matter. I cannot trust myself, therefore you have no right to trust me, and I believe you are doing what is right to refuse to go with me, much as I want you, and sorry as I shall probably be by to-morrow morning that I did not prevail upon you to do it. You can have no doubt

that I have always held you in as profound respect as it is possible for me to any lady whom I have ever known, when you remember all our acquaintance, and for the rest it seems to me that I would sooner cut off this right hand than do you any harm. Will you forgive me?"

There had been no anger in her heart, only a great loss and grief. She put out her hand—

"Yes, Robert."

He held it, that other side of him half got the mastery again.

"Janet," he said, "now I have told you all, are you afraid to trust me—will you go with me?"

She was pendulous for a moment even then. The eyes, the voice of this man, the only one on earth she loved, were hard to resist. Then her will gathered itself up mightily. Her face settled into a resolution that she would hold to the death. She rose up—

"No. I will not go with you Robert Crandall; so help me God, I will not go with you."

Her voice swelled almost into a cry, for it came up to those words on a mighty effort. Then she sat down; a dry sob shivered and shivered through her. Neither spoke for a while, and in that silence one of the city clocks struck midnight.

It was not safe for the young man to remain any longer. His cousins might return any moment. They looked at each other—

"I must take the morning train back," he said. "None of my family know I am here. I saw my cousins leave the house while I watched it, and I knew it was safe to come. You shall hear from me after I return. Good-bye, Janet."

He drew her towards him.

"Good-bye, Robert."

They looked at each other. There were tears in the eyes of both.

"Janet, you will not hate me? You will believe always that I loved you, better than even I myself knew until to night?"

"I will not hate you—I will believe it, Robert."

He kissed the little, white, sad face, not trusting himself for any more words, and went out.

And as he left the steps, in the midst of his disappointment and pain, and both were keen and sharp, Robert Crandall was conscious of a sensation of relief, a throb of exultation. That awful spectre of Remorse which he had sometimes caught glimpses of stalking dimly through the future years, and casting its black

shadow of memory and reproach over all his life, had vanished away.

And for Janet, she went with her white, strained face, and her heavy, heavy head, up to her room that night; but rejoice oh, angels, and sing if you may oh, mother, some new song of gratitude where the white wings of the seraphs make "silver mists" through the eternal spaces, for your child is saved, saved, saved!

And for Janet—back once more into the old groove in which her life was set before Robert Crandall came across it, the old, lonely, desolate, baffled days, the hunger at her heart made keener for the banquet to which she had gone up a little while before, the contrast between the gray, chilly life made stronger, for the sweet fragrance and color which had preceded them; all this Janet struggled with, but such a crisis lived through, such a temptation conquered, did not leave her as it found her. In her inmost soul she never regretted the decision of that night. Courage and strength, and the deeper insight that comes of evil resisted, were given her.

And new, hungry aspirations followed, which were the natural result of her intimacy with Robert Crandall. She fretted sorely against her present position. She covenanted with herself to leave it; and here Janet proved the true stamina of her nature, by not wasting herself in vain longings, and regrets, and dissatisfaction with her lot. All these took a definite, practical form.

She had no friends to apply to for counsel or assistance in this matter. There was Robert Crandall—but the poor, wounded heart put away this thought. She should not dare to trust him, although he had written her several times letters, kind and tender as his former ones, and she had replied briefly and gravely to these. But it was always a great pain to do this. She wanted to get away where she could never hear from him again, and he should not know whether she were living or dead.

So Janet made her plans unassisted, unless of angels; her wardrobe was so well supplied now that it would last her a year, and she was resolved to go back to the old factory town which she had left, and try and find some place in its vicinity where she could work for her board, and attend the district school. She would study very diligently for a year, doing all that was in her power for her general improvement, and at the end of that period it was possible that she might be advanced

enough to take charge of an infant school, or obtain some other position. So reasoned Janet—so she acted. She remained with Mrs. Kenneth for nearly three months after her last interview with Robert Crandall, carefully hoarding up her small wages, and then she left, a little before his vacation, not daring to trust either him or herself with another meeting.

Mrs. Kenneth was very kind, indeed she had been so in a marked degree, ever since her daughter's illness. She regretted to part with the girl for various reasons, and made many inquiries about her future plans and destination. But Janet revealed as little of these as possible, for she wished nothing of her future to reach the ears of Robert Crandall. She simply informed Mrs. Kenneth that she was intending to visit some acquaintances in her native town, but she should not remain there, neither had she decided where she should go.

There was a dignity in Janet's answer which, servant as she was, baffled the lady's curiosity. She got nothing farther out of her. The week after Janet's departure Louise Kenneth returned, quite restored in health. She was greatly surprised at Janet's departure, and made many inquiries respecting her destination, but her mother could give her little satisfaction. Robert Crandall happened to hear the topic discussed between the mother and daughter on the first afternoon that he passed at his aunt's, after his return home in vacation, but neither of the ladies suspected the intent eagerness with which he drank in every word, nor the bitterness with which he thought, "I have lost Janet." Lost to him—saved to herself!

Has this "Story of Janet Strong" no significance for you my countrywomen! You may tell me that she was an exceptional case in mind and heart—I think she was; and yet, in your pleasant and happy homes over all the land, wherever her story may come, dwell those who occupy *her* place in your households.

One common humanity holds you, oh mistress and maid, in its mighty grasp; the same great sorrows and joys—the same great hopes and fears prove you of one lineage and one race!

Do not forget this. Let, if possible, your domestic be to you something more than a stranger and an alien under your roof; "find out the secret place where her soul abideth;" strike with gentle touch some of those great chords, which vibrate in the hearts alike of the high and lowly of your sex. You do not know what blossoming may come of the seed you sow; you do not know what possibilities of

flower and fruit are in the soils of these ignorant, uncultivated natures, but be pitiful to their weakness and needs—be patient with their infirmities, because of your own. Do not make the gulf betwixt yourselves and them so wide that neither can cross it, and clasp hands on the common ground of your sympathies and affections, and in your own households find somewhat of that blessed Work, which alas! many Mrs. Kenneths seek only outside of them.

Stray Thoughts.

BY CLARA AUGUSTA.

A friend! what a rare blessing is a *friend*!

If you have one, love him and cherish him. His price is above rubies. Where in the wide world, shall we find a friend? From what remote corner of the earth, drawn by the irresistible magnetism of attraction, shall he come? What winds shall bear him on his journey? What shores give him a welcome?

But when he does come, let him be treated as a prince. A King come to claim his waiting kingdom. We will be a loyal subject. His interest shall be our interest—there shall be nothing separate in his life and ours.

A friend! One who stands firm, and true, and unshaken by time, circumstance, or the vile weapons of slander! Ours, and ours only! Like a sturdy rock in the very centre of a stream—swayed neither hither nor thither. Bearing, may be, the scars of strife on its iron sides, but holding fast to its place—sure and steadfast as eternity itself!

Our friend must be *ours* only. We feel constantly a desire to appropriate him to ourself. He may love others, but we must hold the first place in his heart of hearts! Is it selfish? Granted. Then we are selfish. We do not want him to care quite as much for any other one as for us! We would like to hold him a little closer than any other may.

We would like the right to go to him, always, in trial—with our troubles and afflictions—our joys and our sorrows, and be sure of his sympathy. In return, what would we give him?

Not a sentiment, not a feeling, not a mere motive—but a principle of friendship, strong and unvarying and lasting, as the pulse of life in our own heart! We would be true to him as refined steel. In his day of adversity, we should be proud to stand beside him, in the face of the whole world—forgiving every error and every sin—content with him as he is; ready to uphold him against every law and every power. Raised up to the highest, most holy shrine in our bosom, by the sacred fact—*he is our friend*!

We would not throw him away for a light cause. As the mother-love pardons the trans-

gressions of her child, so would we, seventy times seven, cast into oblivion the failing of our friend.

We love to be with him. There is something lacking without him.

The round world is not a perfect sphere without his presence. We should be discontented in this life if he was not of it, also.

The earth holds nothing so dear and fair as to give us perfect pleasure—missing him. When we see beautiful things, our first desire is that he may see them, too. When we read quaint old truths that stir the blood like crimson wine, we want him to know their delights! We are never satisfied with the purple sunset skies, unless his eyes, also, are blessed with their glory!

Oh, friendship! forever sanctified be thy name! Sweetest and purest of all earthly passions! A chain reaching across the chaos of doubt and fear; its pins of pearl, and its strings of gold, bridging the dark chasm—reaching across to the white shores of the Beautiful Beyond.

Faith! it is a sweet, solemn word.

A right royal treasure to hold for our own! To take it into our hearts, and keep it there forever, secure and trusted.

How much we lack it! oh so much more than we think! We doubt and fear when there should be no doubt. The evils we conjure up are ten times more terrible than the most terrible reality! We have all imagined things far more dreadful than we have ever seen. We have all feared deeper and darker trials than have ever fallen to our lot.

We say that we believe in God. That is theory. Where is our practice? Alas! it is only a name. Every day proves it. We are tried. We are in poverty. We eat our bread by the labor of our hands. We remember these things, and we doubt. We yield to despondency. We say that life is hard and cruel.

We cast envious eyes on the rich. We say why is it so? What have I done that I should not be prospered like this other man?

The greatest and surest triumph of wisdom is to admit that there are some things beyond our comprehension. That our finite minds can never perceive the secrets of infinity. That we must accept some things on trust—asking no questions—accept them because they are so.

If we wonder, and doubt, and cavil, where is our faith that “all things shall work together for the good of those who love the Lord?”

Oh, how beautiful, how excellent it is to cling to God's love through all trial! never to

doubt Him. To go, undaunted, through fire
and hail, flame and flood, by His will—having
faith like a rock, that He will bring us through
safely—that we shall be saved, cared for, and
at the last—RECOMPENSED.

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The Way Through.

A Sequel to the Story of Janet Strong.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

CHAPTER I.

It is nightfall in November, in a quiet old country village that leans to the sea. The landscape has a certain dreary picturesqueness in it, as it lies cold and lowering under the thick, gray-white clouds. The wind blows in the mists from the sea—mists that bring a sharp, stinging chill with them. The meadows and the fields, and the deep frill of grass by the roadside are all faded—wind and rain have quite worn out the summer's robe everywhere. In the distance the hills which guard the old, rambling village that leans to the sea, stand up stern, dreary, defiant—their branches shorn, their foreheads bare, waiting for the winter, wrapped in garments of storm and darkness, to pass by.

This old New England village was famous for its fine scenery, and the view from that rising ground just beyond the brown mill, was one of the finest for miles around.

Far off on the left was the sea, making a blue curve distinct from the blue of the horizon, and nearer were green swells of woodland, and pretty clusters of white houses, and homely old homesteads and country roads, which seemed like a saffron-colored cord winding over a dead green ground, and little streams making silver fringes here and there, altogether an enchanting picture in the summer.

And the girl, or young woman she is now, standing on that bit of rising ground behind the mill, listens to the angry riot of the waters, swelled by the recent rain, as they lash and tear themselves along the banks.

She has stood there many times; feasted her eyes, gladdened her soul on that same scene when it had on its garments of praise and beauty. She feels the contrast now. Some look of pain and loss blurs her eyes and saddens her face for a moment. There she stands, a young, slender woman, all in gray and brown, which, plain as they are, have some fine harmony of tints that give her an appearance of being better dressed than she really is.

This girl has a remarkably attractive face. Some writer says, quaintly, and I am inclined to believe it, that "if any woman can look pretty at times, she ought to be content."

But it seems that this girl must do that always with those delicate features, that soft, clear complexion, those deep, bright eyes, and the red line of her lips, and the small roses in her cheeks stung into unusual bloom by the wind.

This girl, standing by the old mill, and gazing with hungry eyes over the village of Woodleaf, darkening in the mists and the night, is Janet Strong, with her life widened by six years. They have done a great deal for her. They have made her in face and figure all, and perhaps better than her childhood promised. They have brought some sharp trials and constant struggling. It must naturally be so with one who has neither friends nor fortune in the world, nobody in short to whom to look for aid in any emergency.

But Janet had a strong purpose, a persistent will, and thanks to her early country life, good health. After she left Mrs. Kenneth's, she was not long in obtaining a situation in an adjoining town, where she worked for a board and attended the district school for a couple of years, concentrating all her energies of soul and body on this one object of mental improvement. Such a girl would be likely to

make a bright scholar. Janet did, and at the end of two years the district school teacher fell ill, and her mantle dropped on Janet. She had worn it four years. The work was arduous, and the salary in that out of the way village small enough.

But then she was independent. What a long breath of joy she drew over that thought when she first realized all it meant! She could earn her board and clothes. This, with a few books, and the yearly prizes for her scholars, was about all the salary allowed. But with this the poor girl felt like a princess the first year.

Gradually, however, the feeling wore off, and another, or rather a host of others came to take their places, some of them very nearly related to those old, weary, dumb, restless ones she had so often experienced.

But she kept on at her work, studying still to improve herself, and perhaps hardly guessing how much she did grow in all respects, in that narrow and comparatively barren sphere of her labors. Of course the position of district school teacher gave Janet an entré into all the best families; but Woodleaf was a drowsy, agricultural village, and among the farmers' wives she never found one a whit beyond herself in social cultivation or intelligence, certainly she never found amongst them any glimpse of a life like that she had seen at Mrs. Kenneth's. She had grown now to think of that time without any of the old, sore pain at her heart. These years had even drawn a kindly veil betwixt her and the memory of Robert Crandall, though it was a long, long time before this could be.

He had been the ideal of Janet's youth. No one ever supplanted for a moment his place in her memory, and the contrast betwixt him and all the men she met subsequently, would not be likely to depreciate him in her estimation. Then too, it had this good effect. Those few weeks' association with a man of so much cultivation as Robert Crandall, had refined her taste and elevated her ideals.

Some of the young farmers in the neighborhood, attracted by Janet's face, made a good many efforts to cultivate her society, but unconsciously to the girl herself, there was some fine dignity or reserve about her which effectually prevented her rustic suitors from making farther advances.

Not that her heart was still engrossed by Robert Crandall. Janet was of a bright, healthy, recuperative nature, and although

her affections had certainly suffered a terrible wrench at the time she left Robert Crandall, they had not struck their roots down to the springs of her life.

She was little more than a child then, although one evening did almost make a woman of her. Her thoughts slid back to that time now, for there had been an unusual soreness and despondency amongst them all day.

She had grown quite tired of the sight of the little red school-house, with its great, bare room, and the gaunt benches and desks. Her fate had seemed to darken around her, close, barren, relentless. She had said to herself that her youth was baffled and defeated on every side, that her future stretched away down the years, as the bare gray reach by the sea, with no shade of tree nor light of flowers. She shivered as she looked down the road of her life, and saw the solitary figure bearing the same burdens, going through the same unvarying round of toil.

And after a day in this frame of mind had Janet Strong paused behind the mill to look at the landscape whose general tone harmonized too closely with her morbid feelings; and it was well just then, when the lights of hope were darkened at the windows of her soul, and the anchors of her faith seemed all to have given way, it was well that Janet's thoughts went back to that great danger and crisis of her life. Here was a real, tangible evil from which she had been delivered. There, when her feet had stood on the brink of a precipice so fearful that she shuddered at the very thought of it, a Hand had been reached out to lead her away.

Janet never remembered that time without feeling that the love and the care were still about her life, that it was watched over and remembered by One who would not forget her in her need and loneliness.

Dear reader, there are many who have walked, it may be, unconsciously in the shadow of some awful temptation, of some mistake or evil which might have wrecked their lives; and from this, in some blessed moment they have been delivered. The flame has not so much as scorched their garments, the last fatal step over the precipice has not been taken; and remembering *that* time, surely one has cause for a life of gladness, and gratitude, and charity.

The mists cleared up from Janet's soul as she thought. A new feeling of humility and faith stole into her soul as the wind drove up

from the pine woods some faint fragrance. She turned and walked rapidly down the hill with some new hope and comfort at her heart. She did not suspect that while she stood on the hill too absorbed to notice any event transpiring about her, that a carriage had passed with a solitary occupant, whose attention had been attracted to the still figure on the hill long before he reached it.

And his curiosity being excited by Janet's attitude, the gentleman had managed to get a view of her face as he drove slowly past. He saw it all, the parted lips, red as the clusters of barberries which hung thick on the bushes in the low pastures, the cheeks stung into unnatural bloom by the sea wind, and the blue eyes with the absorbed, restrained expression in them which always denotes secret pain.

This gentleman had keen appreciation of beauty, and just then Janet's was brought out to peculiar advantage, against the background of those wan clouds and the chill, desolate earth. There was a singular picturesqueness in her attitude too. Altogether the gentleman was struck with it, in a way that must certainly have flattered the girl had she suspected it, but she did not, and hurried on with a little shiver towards her home.

CHAPTER II.

The old stone mansion occupied a commanding site in the outskirts of the village. Its east windows looked to the sea, and its west to the mountains; and the ample grounds which suited the stately, but by no means showy mansion in their midst, were laid out with a rare degree of taste. Hedges of buckthorn enclosed the whole, and there were sloping lawns, with brave old horse-chestnuts and cedars, whose deep green seemed like a memory of the lost summer, thrilling the wintry air; and grand walks that gleamed in the distance like a silver gray overshot in the faded grass; and the two great stone lions that flanked the steps, kept their grim wardenship over grounds and dwelling.

The sitting room on this especial night was a glow of warmth, and color, and light. Yet there was no profusion or ostentation anywhere. A few choice landscapes flamed their living beauty along the walls, and the bright sea-coal fire deluged the room with a rich maroon glow, in wonderful contrast with the cold and pallor outside.

"Well, Evelyn, this is pleasant to a man after a ride of ten miles on such a day!" and the speaker, in Cashmere dressing-gown and

embroidered slippers, settled himself down in his ample arm-chair.

"I should fancy it must be an agreeable contrast. Oh, Guy, you dear creature, how tedious and dreadful it must have been!"

The lady's voice interpreted herself, with its soft, pliant, undeveloped tones; I mean undeveloped in all high senses of experience, sympathy, reflection. It was girlish, and lacked character, which however might be latent in the possessor, and yet it was a very pleasant voice to hear, gliding softly along its sibilants.

"It was all that and something else, Evelyn. You see I was wise in my refusal, after all, to take the ride alone."

The small, restless head that had a thousand pretty tricks of motion was poised steadily now.

"I do not like wise people," said the lady, for she was a wife, little as she looked or acted the name. "I like people that live out their impulses, their fancies, their humors. I shall never make a wise woman. I was never out in that pattern."

"I suspect not," smiling down on the small lady as she sat at his feet in an attitude of most bewitching grace, and the firelight at play in her fine gold hair.

Mrs. Humphreys was hardly twenty-one now, and she did not look her years. A mere child she was still, with a face which won you to love it, as children's faces do for their sweetness and simplicity. She was of the golden-haired, blue eyed, peach-bloom type, only there was vivacity and brightness enough about her to relieve her from any reproach of insipidity in face or manner. There was no lack of intelligence either, and she had strong capacities for good or evil; but she was one of those natures that ripen late, and living now her pretty, sparkling, surface life, into which the coming years would plough deep, finding what sort of soil lay beneath, Evelyn Humphreys had a history in no wise peculiar. It is that of thousands of the more favored of her sex—favored after all, it may be, only in a narrow and temporary sense. She was a spoiled child; the only and idolized daughter of parents whose wealth and taste enabled them to surround her with every grace and luxury of life. Then she seemed especially made for sheltering and petting, the sweet, dainty, sparkling little creature, and bloomed into her graceful, fascinating womanhood, with about as much realization of its griefs and faiths, its great, sanctifying joys and

sorrows, as the canaries who sang her eyes open every morning.

And at this time, Guy Humphreys' path and hers crossed each other. He was half a dozen years her senior, a man of fine cultivation, of generous nature and lofty sentiments. But he too, had none of that seasoning and toughening which comes of hard and brave wrestling with life. His parents had died in his boyhood, he was the heir of considerable wealth, he was left to the guardianship of a doting bachelor uncle, he had passed through college most creditably, and had travelled two years abroad, and then in an indolent, intermittent fashion, set about studying for his profession.

Guy Humphreys certainly did not find in Evelyn Winchester his ideal woman, for he had one, and she combined all beautiful qualities of heart with all noble qualities of mind, but he was not the less enchanted with this most bewitching little fairy.

There was no stormy courtship here. Not the faintest ripple of disapproval stirred its smooth waters. Guy had just those qualities of person, and all those chivalric graces of manner, which are most likely to attract the fancies of a girl like Evelyn; and he had those more solid adjuncts of wealth, character, position, which would turn the scales in his favor with her parents.

So, the suit of Guy Humphreys prospered, and with joyous bridal festival, and costly gifts, and marriage settlements, he took to wife the pretty, spoiled child, Evelyn Winchester.

For nearly two years things had gone smoothly as marriage bells with the wedded pair. Both were naturally good natured, if matters moved without especial jarring, which is more than can be said of a great many people; both believed themselves deeply in love with the other, and taking into consideration the character of each, their married life had thus far quite fulfilled its expectations.

In less than two years after his nephew's marriage, the uncle of Guy Humphreys found it necessary to go abroad for a year, and proposed to the young couple that they should install themselves during his absence at the old stone mansion in Woodleaf, where he passed much of his time. The novelty of the thing at once attracted Evelyn Humphreys. The prospect of being mistress of her own house seemed to bring with it a wonderful accession of dignity; and as Guy rather favored the plan, she had her own way, coax-

ing and arguing away with more or less pretty sophistries, all of her parents' objections and fears to this new arrangement.

They concluded that, accustomed as she was to the excitement and gayety of city life, she would sicken with ennui in the country before the winter was over, and after the novelty of the new life had worn off she would be glad enough to return home. So they indulged all her pretty zeal on this occasion, and early in the autumn Guy Humphreys brought his young wife to Woodleaf.

Evelyn's delight in her new home did not wear off as soon as her parents expected. She really had a genuine taste for country scenery, and as the housekeeper quite absorbed all domestic care and responsibility, Evelyn experienced a new pleasure and sense of importance in being ostensible mistress of her own household.

In the course of a few weeks a new inmate was added to the family in a daughter of a favorite cousin of Guy's, who had been his almost inseparable companion in his boyhood.

He was a generous, fine-souled, but rash, immethodical nature; had married young, wrecked most of his property, which was not large, in his first ventures in business, and then gone South with his young wife and child to retrieve his fortunes.

The climate was not kind to the young mother, and in a little while she faded and died; her husband followed her after struggling through a few years, and on his death-bed he dictated a touching appeal to the brother of his boyhood, confiding his helpless little daughter to his cousin's love and protection, and imploring him to take the place of her dead father to his child.

Guy Humphreys was not the heart to resist an appeal like that. The child was sent for without delay, and Maude Woolcott, a little timid, bewildered child of six years, reached the new home where welcome, and care, and tenderness were lavished on her. Mrs. Humphreys took a fancy to the child. Indeed Guy had taken good care that his wife's interest and pity should be awakened in behalf of his small relative before her arrival; so she was petted and indulged between the two quite as much as was likely to prove beneficial to her in any respect.

"Did you have any adventures during your ride?" asked Mrs. Humphreys, as she sat before the fire waiting for the supper bell, for they had old-fashioned hours in the country. "You always meet with some-

thing funny, or marvellous, or out of the way."

"Well, this ride was an exception. I never in the course of my experience had a barer, blanker nine miles back and forth than this one. I scarcely met a person on the road, coming or going, except that solitary figure in gray and brown on the hill."

"Was it a man's or woman's, Guy?" asked Evelyn, with a show of idle curiosity.

"A woman's, my dear; young and remarkably pretty at that. She first attracted my attention long before I reached her, as she stood there on that bit of elevated ground just behind the old mill, where we stopped our carriage the other day to get the view."

"What was she doing there?" asked Evelyn, making pictures out of the coals which were now a bed of red fire blossoms.

"That's what puzzled me. There she stood, still as a statue, her figure carved out with strange picturesqueness against the sombre background of sky and earth. I fancy she was looking at the landscape, but *that* was blurred all over with mists and dark, and lowering with night and age, not one attractive feature in it."

"Did you see her, Guy?" pursuing her questions, because she did not at that moment happen to have anything else to talk about.

"Yes; as I rode by; although I am certain the solitary figure did not see me, so absorbed was she. But it was a remarkable pretty face, with well cut features, and small roses in the cheeks, and lips that were like the reddest of those coals down there. The eyes were blue, not afloat in sunbeams and laughter like yours, Evelyn, but with some sadness or repression in them."

"How closely you must have watched her. Quite too much so, indeed, for a married man," and out of the arch lips flickered a little, bright laugh, very pleasant to hear.

Guy laughed too. Evelyn's manner always gave a peculiar point to her words, making them seem much more than they really were.

"It did not strike me in that light at the time," he said. "I *should* like to know who that girl was, or what she was thinking of."

"Oh, it's just struck me, it must have been Miss Strong, the district school teacher," said Mrs. Deal, the housekeeper, who had entered the room during the latter part of the conversation, and listened to it with some interest. "I saw her at meeting the other Sunday, and inquired her out. I know she's the person, from your description."

"Does she teach that crowd of tow-headed boys and girls who burst out from that little old, red shell just beyond the creek?"

"Yes; she must have a hard time of it with such a coarse, unruly set," volunteered Mrs. Deal.

"I should think so. No wonder she looked absorbed and troubled. She *has* my sympathy."

"How I wish I could see *her*," chimed in Mrs. Humphreys, who was in the habit of idle whims of this kind.

"I don't see the way, my dear, unless you send Maude to the district school. I suppose you would hardly like to place her in the midst of such an uncouth, obstreperous set, even to gratify your curiosity to see the teacher."

"Of course I shouldn't, Guy. One of these days Maude must have a governess. She must be an accomplished young lady, just as if she was our very own."

Guy Humphreys bent forward and kissed his young wife, fervently. He was always extremely gratified when she exhibited any especial solicitude for Maude's welfare, for he well knew there were plenty of women in the world who would not have received the little orphan to her heart and home as Mrs. Humphreys had done. Then the next moment he slapped her smartly on the shoulder—

"That's a capital idea, Evelyn! How did it find its way into your little cranium? We can try the district school teacher for this office of governess to Maude."

"That would be very nice, only I don't believe she could teach Italian and French, and as I said, Maude must be accomplished."

"Nonsense! there's time enough for that, and I expect to take both of you to Paris with me some day. What she wants now is a good, sound, English foundation, and that, I'll be bound, the girl could furnish her."

"Well then, Guy, supposing you call around some time to-morrow and have a talk with the teacher? You're not obliged to take her you know, if she doesn't wear on acquaintance; but it will make the way clear for me to get a look at her, which may be all I want."

"Suppose you go with me and judge for yourself. We'll kill both the birds with one stone."

Just then the tea bell rang. The sound of it banished for the time all thoughts of the district school teacher from the mind of Guy Humphreys and his wife, as he rose up and gave the lady his arm.

But on what apparently very small hinges turn the great events of our destiny! That idle whim of curiosity on the part of Mrs. Evelyn Humphreys, was to form a great turning point in the life and fate of Janet Strong!

CHAPTER III.

The next day was clear, and warm for the season, as though a little lost sunshine of the summer had been left in the year's wine-press, and now in a softened mood she spilled it over the crisped, sodden earth, and it glowed and brightened under it a little, as aged faces do sometimes under the memories of their lost youth.

The district school teacher was neither poet nor artist, but as she went past the old brown mill, with the tired feeling which she always carried away from the last half of her day's work, her thoughts of the year and the day were much what I have written.

But when she reached the wide old farmhouse where she boarded, all such fancies were effectually put to flight by the farmer's wife, who met her at the door, her face full of some important mystery, saying—

"I'm so glad you've come! What do you think's happened! Mr. and Mrs. Humphreys have been in the parlor for the last fifteen minutes, waitin' for you!"

"For me! for me!" murmured the bewildered school teacher. "There must be some mistake."

She had occasionally heard the name of the great people of the village, for they formed of course one of the principal topics which stirred the dead calm of Woodleaf society, but she had never met with a member of the family, excepting Guy's uncle, whose drives had occasionally crossed her walks, but with whom she had never exchanged a word.

"No, there isn't any mistake," stoutly affirmed the farmer's excited wife. "I made sure on that head. It's Miss Strong, the village school teacher, they're after."

Janet hurried up to her room like one in a dream, slipped off her hat and shawl, smoothed her hair, made some little improvements in the details of her dress, and then went down into the parlor.

The gentleman and lady sitting there looked at her with a good deal of polite curiosity as she entered, and the former rose up and presented himself and his wife, with a tone and air of breeding which at once carried Janet back to Robert Crandall.

"You will excuse us for this unceremoni-

ous visit, and for our abrupt fashion of making known its errand. Mrs. Humphreys and myself are anxious to obtain, without delay, a governess for a relative of ours, a little adopted niece, a child who needs instruction in the English branches."

"And," subjoined Mrs. Humphreys, who thought it quite becoming her position and dignity to have a voice in the matter, "we heard of you through our housekeeper, Mrs. Deal, and thought you might find it more agreeable to have a single scholar than fifty of them—at least there would be no harm in asking."

Janet listened to the words. She turned her gaze from the gentleman to the fair and dainty lady, in her wrappings of silk and velvet by his side—the whole thing bewildered her. She passed her hand across her face, and then looked up again, with her blue eyes drowned in blank amazement, and she said, quite as much to herself as her hearers—

"Surely, I must be dreaming!"

"I don't wonder you think so, Miss Strong," said Evelyn Humphreys, and her laugh twittered out gayly. "It's enough to turn one's wits to come upon them in this fashion; but really we are quite in earnest in the matter of wanting a governess for Maude, and she is a bright, loving little thing, who won't give you much trouble, and I fancy you won't find us very disagreeable people to live with."

So at last Janet began to realize that all this was something beside a dream; but her first consciousness in the matter was a feeling of utter incompetency for the position offered her. She must put aside this great, good gift, which transcended all that she ever dared to hope for. Janet knew nothing of policy in business matters, and in this case her simplicity availed her most.

"You have done me a great honor in offering me this situation, and I am not insensible of it, but I must tell you, with sorrow, that I am entirely unqualified for it. I know nothing of music, or French, or any of the modern accomplishments. I have had largely to teach myself, and am capable of taking the charge of a district school where only the most ordinary branches are taught."

"And that's really all we want for Maude. As for music and French, and those things, there'll be time enough, and she's quite behind school-girls of her age, having passed all her life in South America, where it's too warm, or the people are too lazy to study."

"How eager and sensible the little lady

does talk," thought Guy Humphreys, who was vastly amused at the importance she assumed in this interview.

There was a lurking gleam of fun in his eyes, which neutralized the extreme gravity of his tones, as he said—

"I was not aware until this moment, Mrs. Humphreys, that you had investigated so thoroughly the social and educational habits of South America."

Evelyn leaned back in her chair and laughed merrily.

"That is the way, Miss Strong, in which he always treats my opinions on any serious subject. But I'm right in this one, for all that."

"I didn't dispute it, my dear. I only wondered where you had attained such a degree of information." Then he turned to Janet, who had been deeply amused with all this. "But, to return to the matter in hand. I assure you, you need have no scruples with regard to your qualifications for teaching our little girl. She wants to learn just what your scholars in the school over there do—how to read, and write, and spell, with the multiplication table and the first principles of geography. We can get her masters for the ornamental branches as soon as it is necessary. So, if this is your only scruple, don't let it stand in your way for a moment."

"It is my only one, Mr. Humphreys," answered Janet, who had now regained something of composure. "I need not tell you how glad I must be to accept your offer, or that, if you intrust your niece to my care, that I shall do the best that lies in my power for her instruction."

"Then it is a bargain, I think. Now about the salary. What will satisfy you for the year?"

"I have not the slightest idea what my services will be worth to you. You will satisfy me by settling that," she answered.

The gentleman named a sum which far exceeded her expectations. It was more than double the amount which she received as district school teacher. All collateral matters were easily adjusted. Janet feared there might be some difficulty in getting the committee to provide another teacher before the close of the term, but Mr. Humphreys said he could manage all that, in a tone which left no doubt as to his faith in his own powers of convincing that august body, and it was settled before he left, that Janet should on the following week take up her home in the Humphreys mansion on the hill.

"Oh, isn't she pretty, Guy! I'm certain that I shall like her," said Mrs. Humphreys, as her husband handed her into the carriage.

But for Janet—she went straight to her room, the farmer's curious wife having to content herself as she best could, with the teacher's promise of relating all which had transpired during the interview; and sinking down on her knees by the bedside, she sobbed out her thanks to God, for the new gift He had sent her. And so it was that Janet Strong took her new fortune!

"Come here Maude. I want to tell you about the new governess you're to have next week," said Guy Humphreys to the little girl, as she entered the room to bid him and Mrs. Humphreys good night.

The little orphan rubbed her fingers into her sleeping brown eyes, and shook her short, thick curls very decidedly.

"I don't like governesses. They're always old, and cross, and ugly, like duennas. The little English girl I loved in South America told me so, and she knew, for she had one in London."

"Oh, but this lady is of a different type altogether," answered Guy, amused at the child's picture of her ideal governess. "She's young and very pretty, and will be very kind, and teach you a great many nice things that you will like to learn."

"I shant like to learn anything. I'd rather play with you and Aunt Evelyn. It's a great deal nicer than studying," persisted the child.

And so, finding that this fancy had taken deep root in her mind, Guy desisted from further remark on the subject, certain that when the little girl saw her new governess, all these preconceived notions would be put to flight. The event proved his wisdom. The Woodleaf committee were easily induced by Guy's representations to provide another teacher for the red school-house, and at the appointed time, Janet made her advent at the stone mansion, and her shy, but bright-faced little pupil was reluctantly led in to see her.

"She is only a little younger than I, when I was left fatherless and motherless too," thought Janet, and this gave a new tenderness to her face and voice, as she asked, "Will you come and let me see you, my child?" and Maude went, with her eyes wide and searching on her new teacher's face.

Mr Humphreys watched the meeting with a good deal of interest.

"There, Maude, didn't I tell you the truth?"

Don't you think you will like Miss Strong, after all?"

"Yes, I think I shall, Uncle Guy," was the child's decided answer, and she put up her mouth for a kiss.

What a change to Janet Strong from the farm-house, with its coarse, narrow, cramped life, to this charmed one in the stone mansion! Her very chamber, with its soft colors and luxurious furniture, was fairly an inspiration, and then she had the beauty of pictures, the inspiration of music, the graces and stimulants of a refined social life about her.

It was surprising how gracefully she sank into it; but Janet Strong had some inward grace which readily shaped itself into outward harmony, and she very easily adjusted herself to these new conditions. It often at first suggested Mrs. Kenneth's to her, only her position now was totally unlike the one she occupied there.

Mrs. Humphreys, like all undisciplined, impulsive natures, took vehement likes and dislikes, and she had conceived a strong fancy for Janet, and as the two were thrown much into each others' society in their country home, Mrs. Humphreys made a confidant of Janet, and treated her in all respects like an equal.

Then, there was a large library, in whose contents the young governess fed her half-starved mind, and Maude was not the only one who made surprising leaps in knowledge. Mr. Humphreys too was greatly interested in his young governess. She was unlike any woman he had ever met, for Janet's necessary self-dependence had wrought in her strength and solidity of character: and yet, sensible as she was, there was a peculiar simplicity and frankness about her.

"She was worth a dozen ordinary women," he often remarked to his wife, who had a good-natured pleasure in repeating this bit of flattery to the individual who was the subject of it.

So Mrs. Humphreys did not regret her housekeeping, and the winter went swiftly and pleasantly over the small family under the roof of the gray-stone house, and in after years its inmates used to look back on it and long for the peaceful flow of its hours once more.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

My Friend in the Country.

BY LOUISE E. VICKROY.

My friend, Mary Sheldon, the dear, good girl, was a belle in the city where she was born and grew up to womanhood; she is not less admired here in the woods, among the mountains of Pennsylvania.

She takes all the pains here to look pretty and be entertaining, just for our little circle, as she did for her most fastidious city friends. I believe the very chickens admire Mary. She knows just how to talk to people in the country; she knows, if they are, apparently, shut in by hills, that the reverberating of the railroad whistle and the curl of white smoke, showing the path of the locomotive, like a conqueror's plume, means something—means that daily papers can circulate even here, and that the electric wires carry their messages to all the little way-stations of these obscure regions as well as to the great cities.

It did not take Mary long to see just what the innocence, what the happiness, what the courtesies and sentiments of the people with whom she came in contact, were.

She knew the old lady was one who would scorn to bow the knee to Baal, who, when we called at her cottage and referred to the neighbors on the hill of suspected secession proclivities, remarked that she "had taken *dabs* from them for years for being a Methodist Abolitionist, and never minded it, but when they used the *banefullest, insultinest* language about the government, she wouldn't take it," and was not surprised to hear the picture of Abraham Lincoln, which hung on the wall in all its preternatural ugliness, declared to be handsome, for in the old lady's eyes handsome is that handsome does.

Mary is one who improves in the country; she has even grown weather-wise; she knows by the dark cap of clouds on the mountain-peak, or by the wail of the winds through the great Gap of the Laurel Hill, whether she shall venture to ride on horseback to-day or not. And, speaking of Mary's riding on horseback, reminds me I owe Mary one grudge concerning a circumstance, a scene in which I was chief actor. It happened a good while ago, but I really keep spite at her yet, because she was witness to it—no, not exactly spiteful, for she couldn't help seeing what occurred, unless she had closed her eyes. I wish she had closed them, truly—but this wish is vain, and my vexation unreasonable, so I won't do her any harm, but just forget about it—ah, yes, I

shall forget it probably long before she does and before I do I'll tell you about it.

Mary has a natural fondness for horsemanship, and was regularly instructed in the art in Madame Somebody's—some French lady's riding-school, and I wasn't. Of all living animals, I can say I am most afraid of a living horse; and of all dead animals, I am most afraid of a dead horse, for I saw one once when I was a child, and that memory has haunted me ever since. But, to go back to my first attempt at horsemanship, it was Mary's coaxing won me over to try the same, and I was arrayed in my brother's hat, with a bow of blue ribbon tacked on one side and some feathers stuck in the other—I do believe they were goose feathers—and the skirt of my dress was proportioned to the waist, like a baby's before it tries the entanglement of creeping.

I went out to the block; Mary was already mounted; then I was mounted—upon a living horse I was put—I almost wish it had been dead. I am a little woman, my steed was tall, and I didn't feel comfortable; I really couldn't get my breath rightly. I shook, and, before my foot was placed in the stirrup, I just tumbled over the other side of the horse to the ground.

That would never do; this weakness was only physical; my heart beat loud and hard, but I felt my spirit, if it could only have its way, was as brave as a lion, so I rose up, was lifted on again, and we set off.

It is a queer feeling to be on horseback, but I tried to think it was nothing very different from seesawing on a board put through a rail fence.

A little curly-headed thing used to sit on one end of such a seesaw with me, and look so funny bobbing up and down; and, thinking about this curly head, I rode away. I say I rode, that is, I hung on, or rather I stuck on my perch, and by degrees began to feel myself quite used to it, when we came to a small, swift-running stream.

Following Mary's, my horse walked into the water; he went in under a tree with low-hanging branches—not so low as to threaten to Absalomise me certainly, but so low that I could conveniently reach them; whatever induced me to do it I don't know, but, in my greenness and terror, I reached up and caught hold of a sturdy limb. As the horse walked on, and the limb was stationary, you may guess the result. I swung a moment between heaven and earth, then, wearied of that, let

go, and there was a splash; Mary heard it, and looked back; my innocent charger looked back too.

There was I, quite neatly bridging the brook—my head was on dry land at one side, my feet were dry at the other. Mary says my face was very white, and that I only said, in sepulchral tones, "I'm dead!" and I suppose I thought I was, but I really was not hurt at all bodily, though my feelings were.

Now Mary remembers that circumstance, and tells it *very occasionally* right before me, and to show her my independence it is that I publish it.

Why here I am talking of myself, when I intended to talk of Mary Sheldon only. She stands beside me now, arranging her beautiful hair; a faint perfume, suggesting all things delicate and rare, floats to me; I tell her this, and she laughs and says: "Oh this Ambrosia, it smells to me just like dear mother's mince-pies."

No one ever understood the art of dressing better than Mary—or no, I don't mean that, I believe she does not study dress at all—well, no one was ever gifted with better taste in dress than she. Her dresses are all of good material, generally unnoticeable in color, always elegant in fit and finish. Her travelling-dress is chosen for its strength, rather than fineness; her dress-up frocks are all of lady-like fineness of texture.

When she chooses a new bonnet, trust me it is never a *stunner* in its uprearing or down-drooping; neither is it unfashionable; yet, let the style be what it may, she does not ornament her head-gear with sunflowers, or poppies, or sanguinary cherries of that size that draw the prizes at Horticultural Exhibitions.

Oh, how few city people know how to dress when in the country, so that they shock no one's sense of propriety. To wear a lovely silk for a walk in the woods is abominable; to wear old-fashioned or skimpy or faded garments, just because you are in the country, is a manifest want of respect for your entertainers, and no child will be so stupid as not to know when you feel genteely attired, so attired that you would not blush to meet a city acquaintance. And, wo betide her who dares to bedizen herself in a full blow of those gay pieces of finery which come on one by degrees in the city—for a bright scarlet cloak, for instance, worn at a country church, ere one of its congregation has ever even seen one, hung in a show-widow, will cause some shaking of heads among old men, some sighings

among old ladies; and the young married ladies will call the wearer a fool, the young men will make some dashing remarks, and the young girls—you do not surely expect me to say that lovely young ladies would be envious or ill-natured—I shant say so at any rate; and as I told you before, Mary is loved by every one.

What eyes for the beautiful that creature has; when the hills in the morning are mantled with mist, and when the newly-risen sun tinges the white with all the colors of the rainbow, so faintly that they are the mere ghosts of colors, she says some very beautiful things, and how she says them!

Then Mary has a vein of superstition in her, too; she says she feels really jealous of, and vexed about, the new steam engine put in operation at the Iron Works near by, since I told her how only a year ago, when a fire was made on the hearth, according to a superstition of the olden time, a young virgin's hand kindled it into a blaze, that the yield of iron might be fair.

"O, man!" she exclaimed, "mighty miracle worker! amid the smoke and din of your machinery, still spare us something of the long ago—show us now and then on the thorny stem of reality some fragile blossom of romance!"

Then my Mary is a church-going girl—sensible, discreet, and with a large bump of reverence, I am sure, though I do not know where that organ lies.

She goes to church, and would think it wicked to laugh, even to smile, at any errors in pronunciation or grammar in the sermon or prayer of a sincere Christian. She did not even smile when a plain, old local preacher reproved the female members of the church for wearing gewgaws, and pronounced it *fewjaws*!

She listened, with almost tearful gravity, when a gray-haired old Scotchman, in earnest prayer, during the dry season, besought, "Lord gie us rain that we may hae corn, good corn. Lord, na such wee bits o' nubbins as ye gie us last year." Mary, I say, did not smile, for of Christians it is said, "by their fruits ye shall know them;" and this old man's heart was in the right place; she knew of his passing benevolence; she remembered how he had refused to sell corn to speculators at a distance, but reserved it to give to the poor at home. Doubtless the prayer was intended to be a humble petition for daily bread; the quality of corn alluded to was in reference to others, not himself.

But when the strong-voiced minister, whose wife was about dying, declared in his exhortation that he had a dear father in heaven, a dear mother in heaven, dear brothers in heaven, dear sisters in heaven, and *hoped* soon to have a dear wife in heaven, it did play the mischief with her gravity, and she laughed slightly then, uproariously afterwards.

Country people generally call Mary a nice, quiet girl; only once have I known her to be suspected of being demoralized in the least. I'll tell you of that. A half dozen of us walked one evening by the river side, where Dennis O'Brien's skiff was moored; not one of us could row a skiff, and to know how would have availed us little, for the skiff was locked. We looked from the pretty little barque to the sparkling waves, and indulged in that cheapest of all luxuries—wishing—when along came Dennis. He had a certain place where he kept his key; he looked in that place and found it gone; then he turned and looked at each of us, fixed his gaze upon Mary, and said, looking straight at her—

"I do believe, young lady, you have hid my key!"

Mary protested earnestly she had not, and at last demanded to know why he should suspect her more than the rest.

"Because," said he, looking into her face, "your eyes were never put into your head for the good of your *soul*."

Mary laughed and clapped her hands, while an unnoticed one of the party, wishing to be noticed, asked—

"Dennis, what were my eyes put in my head for?"

With a courteous bow he answered—

"Not for the good of your body!"

Just then he found his key, unlocked the skiff, and rowed away. The lady with the *unbeautiful* eyes, to use a common and expressive term, subsided after this remark.

"O, Mary!" say I, "do help me out here. I am writing a story of a girl, an aimless sort of young lady."

Mary interrupts me.

"She has no business to be aimless when soldiers are to work for, and poor widows and orphans to be fed and clothed, and a country plunged in war and deluged in blood!"

"Oh, hush, Molly dear, one moment till I write a line."

Dear reader, I didn't mean to make Mary out an entirely aimless young lady, for she has

worked for the soldiers so hard—has sewed, and knitted, and jellied, and preserved, and pickled—just imagine.

“Never mind, Mary, I’ll try to do justice to the young lady of whom I write; but she was turned out a finished, elegant young lady at eighteen, expected to marry and have an establishment like other young ladies, but is just now spending time in the country, where she ought to meet a lover.”

“Oh!” interposes Mary, “if she don’t find a lover in the country, let her do as I do, find incidents.”

And so I have just opened a book, and pointed out a certain page in it for Mary to peruse. It is the story of Hans, who was sent to find his master’s cow; and hours after, Hans was found running up and down the field, saying he did not look for the cow, but had found something so much better. What was it? “Why three blackbirds.” Where are they? “Oh, one I see, a second I hear, a third I am looking for.”

Here let me close this paper, saying, when Mary’s incidents sing clear to her, alight near her, or are traced to their coverts, you shall have the benefits.

Cornie.

BY BELLE ST. AUBYN.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" and the slight, white-lad form of my little friend tossed restlessly upon the bed. I rose and bent quickly over the pillow where the little pale face rested so wearily, and saw that large tears were stealing slowly over her cheeks.

"What is it, my darling? Are you suffering so much?" I asked, anxiously, pushing the short rings of brown hair away from the poor, pale forehead. "What can I do for you?"

"Nothing, nothing—thank you," she sobbed. "Oh, I feel so miserable!"

Again she tossed over, and this time buried her face in the pillow and began to sob convulsively. I was grieved beyond expression. Everything to cheer, comfort or relieve had proved unavailing. Daily, Cornie Prince was sinking beyond our reach. What could we do to save her?

Filled with painful emotions, I sat on the side of her couch, holding the little trembling hands, and striving to soothe her. Finally a thought occurred to me which caused me to ask almost abruptly—

"Cornie, I want to know why you are fading away so rapidly? What is on your mind?"

She looked up at me with great eyes full of astonishment, still wet with the rain of tears. Then she answered with tremulous lips—

"Is not my darling far away from me, exposed to danger, perhaps death? It is killing me."

"That is not enough to put you here, Cornie. There is something else. You are no exception to others in this sorrowful story. Thousands like yourself have given up all they hold dear for our country's sake. Many have seen them go to return no more. Others have received the intelligence that their best-beloved ones have been maimed, crippled for life. It is the daily story. Yet they are not pining away like this, as those without hope might do. Your darling is alive, well, in no imminent danger, and may not be for some time to come. So I think that, with one like you, ready to bear all things as you have proved yourself—there must be some other cause for grief. I do not want to intrude upon the privacy of your feelings, yet I think if you could tell me your trouble, it would be

a relief to do so. Am I not your friend, dear Cornie. Will you not trust me?"

She flung a pair of trembling arms around me impulsively, and sobbed there for a moment upon my bosom. Then she spoke, huskily—

"I will tell you, though you will think me silly perhaps. But it has worried me so long that I can't bear it.

"You know it is just a year now, since I was married. Two little months my dear husband was with me, then duty called him away. Oh, Kate, you will never understand how I loved him, or how it hurt me to give him up. I thought it would kill me. The morning he left me, I threw myself upon the bed and bit the pillow to hush the cries of agony that rose to my lips, lest my grief should make our parting harder for my darling. Oh, *how* I suffered. Every possible evil that could befall him, and prevent his return to me, I conjured up. But I think after a while, my better nature was triumphant and I grew more calm. I know it was wicked to love as I did. My love was an idolatry, and I began to fear God would punish me by taking him away from me forever.

"Time passed. His letters came frequently—such long, loving letters. You have heard some of them, and can guess what a source of comfort they were. They seemed to express such a love as I felt. I was so proud and happy, to be so idolized; and he was so noble, talented, and beloved by others. Ah, *you* know how much cause I have to love my husband, and how much I *do* love him! Of what use then to dwell upon it?

"The spring passed. How hard I tried to be patient and hopeful. I went into society to chase away a tendency to morbid brooding over injurious fancies. I read, studied, walked, rode, played—everything; and I do think I should still be going on hopefully, but for the fear that intruded itself in spite of me. His letters came less frequently, even shorter, and not so loving as at first. It has grown worse and worse ever since the summer. Autumn has come now, and two months nearly have passed without a line from him. Oh, Katie, what can it mean? If he has ceased to love me, I shall die."

Here then was the secret. She thought she had lost her husband's love, and her little tender heart was breaking. For a time I could say nothing. The position I held was a painful one. My poor little friend was standing upon dangerous ground. How to

save her the best way became a puzzling question. At length I said, gravely—

"Cornie, doubts of your husband's love are unworthy the high tone of character you have always evinced. Do you know what terrible injustice you are doing him?"

"Oh, Kate, I don't mean to be unjust. I am only fearful. I couldn't blame him I think, if it were so, for men don't feel as strongly as women do. Besides, I am such a puny, helpless little thing, while he is so noble, so manly. I wouldn't wonder if he forgot to love as I do. Still, it would kill me, I am sure."

"My child, you do not think properly upon this subject. Else you would never say that men feel less keenly. Their love is as deep and fervent, I am assured. But they are in a different position. We must not expect such expressions from them, as we are able to give. Just reflect for a little while, my friend; draw a comparison between your own and your husband's relative positions at the present time, and see if you cannot find a good reason for what your morbid fancy would teach you to construe into neglect."

She looked up at me with eager, wondering eyes, and said, simply—

"Go on."

"Well," I continued, "begin now with yourself. Since he was called away, by your own showing, you have found nothing to do but to 'kill time'—first in one way, then another. No wholesome, hearty labor to absorb the mind, expand the intellect, keep in play all the better feelings of your nature. Only a wild, feverish round devoted to the one object, namely, to enable you to drag through the dread period of his absence. Is not this true?"

"Yes." But I could not help it. What else could I do?"

"No matter now. We will talk of that farther presently. Having looked at your case, now let us look at his. What do his letters say of his employments?"

"You shall see for yourself," she answered, rising and taking a carefully tied package of letters from a drawer in her dressing-case. Sitting down upon the bed, she untied them and spread the beautifully written sheets open upon her lap. Patiently I prepared to listen. A long array was before me; but since I was to judge between these two, for the sake of the happiness of the one nearest—perhaps of both eventually, it was but right for me to undertake the task with my eyes fully opened in every respect.

These first epistles were miracles of tenderness, filled to overflowing with a love that broke forth in the most beautiful and glowing language. The fond young husband had a habit of writing daily, a sort of diary in which every thought and feeling was faithfully portrayed. The letters were long, and came at intervals of a week or fortnight, at most. They were not busy then, only "cruising about," waiting for active duty, he said, frequently. From their tone I perceived that he assumed the part of comforter, often reasoning away fears and repinings. Eventually, her own letters must have been full of discontent, forebodings, and prayers for his return—prayers to which he could only answer, "my darling, I cannot." He was not his own master, but a servant—a slave to the duties laid upon him as a truly loyal American.

So it went on for a time. By and by came missives of a different tone—still loving, still kind—but more hurried, and telling of toilsome days and nights—dangerous vigils, exposure, fatigue—everything attendant upon an active and laborious life—but through all, breathing the deep, unchanged, fervent devotion that characterized him as a loyal husband, a noble man. I listened with the most intense interest, quietly pointing out the changes as they came, and explaining my thoughts to her concerning them. Sometimes letters written in moments stolen from sleep, while all others lay exhausted around, then would lay for weeks in his possession ere he could get an opportunity to send them to her. I pointed out the dates, the notes, and little interlines, with a feeling of reverence for the man who could thus toil, brave all, dare all, suffer all, and yet in the midst of it, sit down and pen such lines to one he loved, desiring to comfort her, never thinking of self.

When she had finished, she looked up from the last hurriedly written half sheet, a grieved expression lingering around the sweet young mouth.

"See—the last—only one little half sheet," she said. "Three long, weary weeks—yes, four—of waiting, filled with tears, suspense, agony, and then *this* was all that he had to comfort me."

I took the letter from her hand, reading aloud from the page—

"*My own dear Wife.*—We are before Vicksburg, carrying on the siege. Success must follow our many and unyielding efforts. Day and night we know no rest. We are nearly all of us worn out. Now, as I write, my com-

rades are sleeping for a few moments around me; any moment ready to spring up to duty, perhaps to danger. Our good vessel has borne much. Her pretty hull is all battered and beaten with the conflicts of war; but she will soon have a chance, I hope, to put on a new dress, when Vicksburg shall have fallen to us as a grand victory. When that time comes, I shall hope to see my wife, my blessed, angel wife, once more. Oh, the joy of that reunion! In the last three weeks, I have stolen moments to write a great deal, but found no way to send to you the great love coined into words. This fragment may never reach you—it is but a mere chance if it does. And knowing this, I am unwilling to send all I have written until I can make sure it can reach you. Time is so precious, I cannot bear that one word should be lost that I may find myself able to write. I shall hope they may yet help you to bear my absence till we meet again."

"Oh, Cornie, what do you find here to complain of! See how he thinks of you, amid everything," I added at the conclusion. "Darling, you have been making misery for yourself and him."

"For him!" she cried in astonishment; "for him! How?"

"Go back to some of those letters in your hand, and see how sadly he dwells upon the anguish you have given vent to in your letters. To judge by their tone, one would think you had written of nothing but your loneliness—your misery, and begged him always to return to you."

"Well, and was I wrong, when it was true? I was agonized in his absence; I thought of nothing but his return—urged nothing but that."

"And at the same time knew it vain. Before you married him, you knew he was in the service for a certain period of time, and *could not* resign unless compelled to by ill health. Think well, and see if you don't see for yourself that you have been selfish, unreasonable, and forcing upon him a double burden. In addition to his own grief at separation, he has his duties—the dangers of his position, and all your burdens to bear. Tell me, Cornie, is this the way you are going to help your husband through life? Is this to be your mode of lightening his difficulties—smoothing his pathway? Answer me candidly, darling, if you think you are just right."

"Oh, no, no, not as you put it!" she said, in deprecating accents. "Katie, I have been blind—unpardonably blind and selfish. I can

see it all now. Oh, I said I was unworthy of him, my brave, good, noble husband! What can I do? Advise me, dear Katie! Tell me how to act."

"If I must advise you, you must promise to follow my suggestions faithfully, or it will prove useless."

"I do promise you," she hastened to say, eagerly.

"Then seek out some good, wholesome employment. Let every hour be filled with something. Allow yourself no time for doubts and brooding. Live less in imaginary worlds, and more in the real. You have your books, music, &c. Very well. Give them due attention. Practice and study well, but don't weary yourself trying to create an interest in these pursuits, without a better motive than merely to kill time. Do it for the sake of the pleasure you will give your husband on his return, in the excellence of your acquisitions."

Her eyes brightened with an enthusiastic impulse; but she said, earnestly—

"That is well enough, but *all* of my time cannot be filled up thus."

"True. You will want out-door exercise. Often you will want to take a walk. Perhaps in some of these walks a beggar may come to your side, pleading for a 'penny to buy bread.' They often accost me with this plea. Well, suppose you were to stop and ask the child questions. It might tell you a pitiful tale of suffering. Its father killed in the army, mother sick, little brothers and sisters suffering for bread. The dreary winter will come ere long, bitterly cold. You can't turn away heedlessly from the poor little ragged petitioner. You go home with him to see if he has told you the truth, and there find the reality worse than the little quivering lips had power to picture. Oh, how your sympathetic heart will ache! You will try to think what you can do. Perhaps you will apply to some kind physician, and ask him for a prescription for the sick mother. A few pennies you will not miss to buy the medicine, which she may take hopefully and thankfully as she gains relief. But this is not half you will be prompted to do. You will think of many cast-off garments in your closets, useless to you—but holding warmth and decency in their folds for those little ones. You eagerly cut and sew them up—smiling to see how readily those little white fingers fashion the little garments, so strange to your sight. Then you want to see them in the 'new clothes' you have

made, and survey the effect with the newest, sweetest sensations of pleasure. How your heart beats to note the gleeful, half shy, but happy little faces, as they parade their new possessions! How the poor mother's pale face and humid eyes haunt you with the most thrilling sense of emotion, as her feeble hands carry yours to her lips with the gratified 'God bless you' trembling through them."

"Oh, Kate," she breathed, "why have I seen nothing of this before. I *have* been blind indeed! My life has been one long, miserably selfish dream. God forgive me!"

"It is not too late to begin now, dear Cornie!" I said, tenderly clasping her in my arms. "You are young, and proper care and exercise will soon make you strong again. Every day you will follow your husband's example, and write him a full account of the events that occur. Tell him just how you employ your time. Write to him cheerfully, hopefully. Paint glowing pictures of home that will make him long to fly to you, the moment the bonds of duty can be slung aside. Never breathe a word of complaint. Comfort his weariness and solitude all you can, and make him feel how much he has need of you. So shall you keep his heart forever, in bonds that shall outlive this life and become immortal."

She dropped her head upon my shoulder and wept softly, murmuring—

"You are my good angel. What could I do without you?"

"Much. You only need a 'first lesson.' I shall have to come to you presently. You will soon have far outstripped me."

She smilingly shook her head, but I saw that new resolves had been kindled, and for the time dropped the subject.

Several weeks passed. Every new day brought fresh stories from the active little thing who had taken up the burden of a new life. She progressed rapidly. Sometimes she flagged a little, but soon rallied to go on more steadily than before. Day by day a new and beautiful light shone from the sweet eyes, now no longer heavy with weeping, but bright and pure in the flood of holy feeling born within her—a pure, womanly sympathy. She had ceased to look far away in the mystic future with dreamy idleness, and speculate on the misery it might bring, and with busy fingers daily gathered up new jewels of experience to twine into her young life.

The effects produced by this new phase of affairs became apparent in everything around

her. But in nothing more than in the tone of her husband's letters. He hailed the change with an eager joy that found vent in fervent outpourings of affection. It seemed as if no words could express the fulness of the sentiment; and the great desire to be near her, to see her again, was almost beyond endurance. He was so rejoiced that she had learned patience—that she could be cheerful, and encourage him to duty. Half the burden of his life was taken away, when he knew that she could bear her fate cheerfully.

It was a sweet and touching thing to have her come to me with these treasures—holding them in her tiny hands as if afraid some thought-jewel or tender word might fall away from the white sheet and be lost; then to hear her read them in her tremulous, glad tones, lifting her eyes often from the page to give some strong expression of thankfulness for this boon that had been granted at last. She was so sure of his love now. She could see so plainly where the trouble had all lain, and with humid eyes would upbraid herself for the past, till brought back again by the blessed reality to the sweetness of the present.

Was not this something worth striving for—to be so loved, so blessed by a dear one on whom her life centred all its hopes? He called her his guardian angel; told her how he was cheered and strengthened by her letters. They came to him like blessed ministering spirits when he felt most worn and sad, and felt the need of comfort and sympathy. Whenever he had a leisure moment, they were his companions, and he would read them with a fancy that *she* was talking to him. They led his thoughts into better channels—were his associates—dearer and more entertaining than any comrade around him. They should keep his feet always in straight paths, until her own little hand could guide him over dangerous places. Already they had led him gently to thoughts of higher, holier things. He was beginning to comprehend more of the purpose for which life was given, and to strive to fulfil his mission. In her simple, child-like wisdom, she was teaching him great truths till now unheeded.

"Can it be that I—I, poor, insignificant little thing that I *am*, have this power?" she would murmur, with a great wonder brooding over her young face. "I could not have believed or hoped it. Yet it is so. Oh, thank God!"

Reader, if like Cornie, you have been walking blindly, remember the same light will

guide you into right paths. You too will be bewildered with the evidence of your own power, and intoxicated with the sweetness of the new joys that performance of duty always brings. No one is so weak they can do nothing. The most insignificant of mortals has power for good inherent in them, if it were only brought out by will and action.

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